



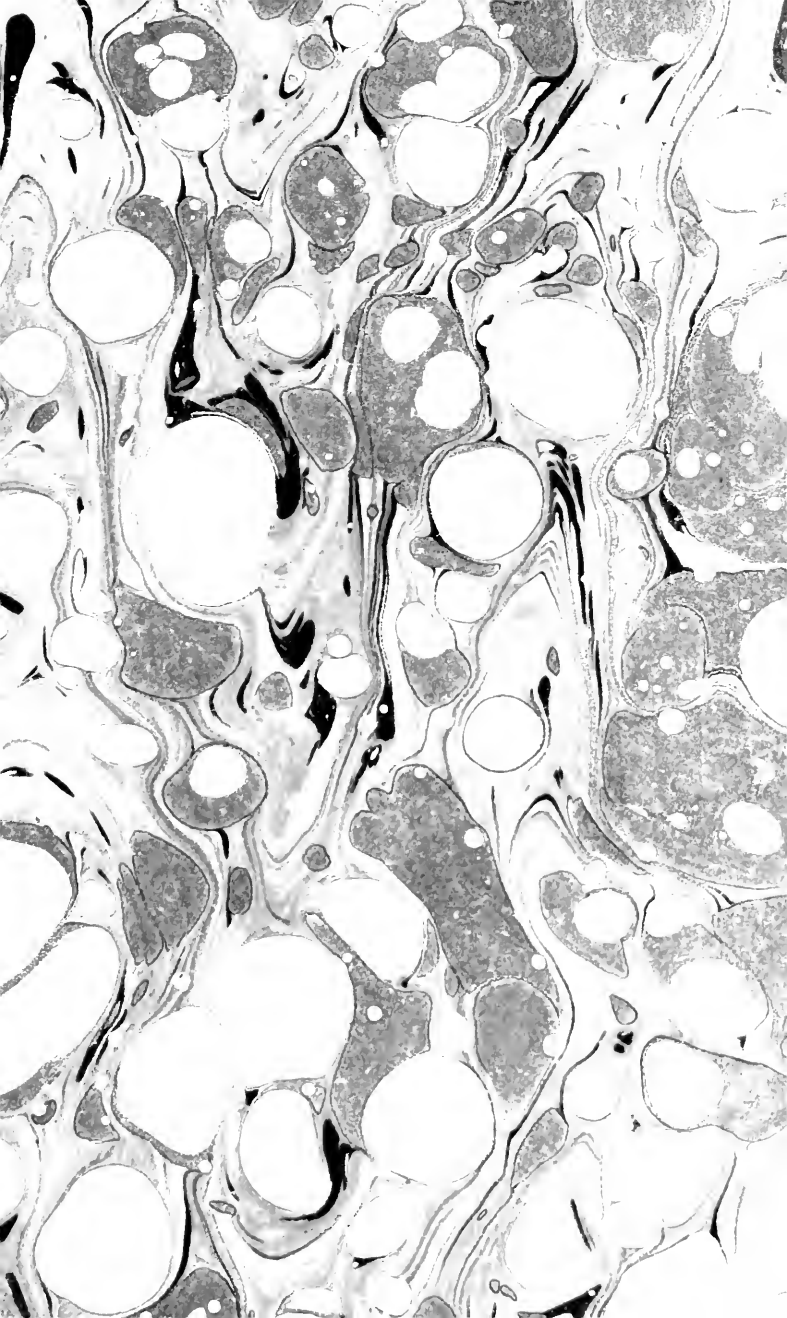
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OF THE

INCLUDING

A MEMOIR OF HER MAJESTY,

THE

(MARIE AMELIE).

FROM THE SECOND LONDON EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

1852.

430891
21.12.44

Printed by T. K. & P. G. Collins.

TO HER MAJESTY,

Marie Amelie,

QUEEN OF THE FRENCH,

THESE MEMOIRS

ARE, BY GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

INSCRIBED BY

HER MAJESTY'S FAITHFUL AND OBLIGED SERVANT,

ANNIE FORBES BUSH.



P R E F A C E
TO
THE SECOND LONDON EDITION.

THE very favourable impression which the publication of this work occasioned, as well on the Continent as in London, obtained for the author a most gracious permission from the Queen of the French, to dedicate it to Her Majesty.

Flattered by so gracious a mark of Her Majesty's condescension and favour, the Author has been induced to add a Memoir of the Queen of the French, obtained from sources exclusively authentic, and never before published. She may here, perhaps, be permitted to state, that the whole of the Memoirs were written in FRANCE, and compiled exclusively from researches in that country. She gratefully acknowledges the commendation of the press generally, and trusts to as favourable a reception of the present edition.

PARIS, *July*.

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QUEENS OF FRANCE.

MEROVINGIAN RACE.

QUEEN BASINE.

(Reign of Childeric I.)

FOUR hundred years after the commencement of the Christian era, the northern barbarians, who were attracted towards Gaul by the beauty of the country, and the salubrity of the climate, made incursions into the Gallic States, then in the possession of the Romans, who, under Julius Cæsar, had been ten years in achieving this conquest, and who fought long and bravely to preserve that which their predecessors had obtained with so much difficulty. The Romans, however, experienced an entire defeat under their general, Syagrius, and in the year 486 Gaul fell into the power of the Franks who were commanded by their chief, Chlodovich, or Clovis (from which name that of Louis is derived), and from

that period the name of France was bestowed on Gaul by its conquerors.

Clovis was the first chief who bore the title of King of France; for although several of his predecessors had acquired great advantage in their attacks upon the Romans, hitherto they had ultimately been repulsed with such vigour that they were frequently obliged to recross the Rhine; and Clovis was the first who resided as sole conqueror in France. The trifling importance attached to the greater number of the first race of kings, the similarity of their names, and, above all, the continual division of their states, inevitably introduced a degree of confusion into their history.

Prior to the entire subjugation of Gaul by the Franks under Clovis, four French chiefs had successively reigned over a part of the country as kings; but very little is known of them, France having been at that time shrouded in the mist of barbarism.

History affords no record of the names of the wives of the first three of those kings,—Pharamond, Clodion, and Merovee. Fredegher recounts, that the wife of Clodion, bathing one day in the sea, was surprised by a monster, by whom she had the warlike Merovee, whose glorious conquests entitled him to give his name to the kings of the first race. Basine was the wife of the fourth chief, Childeric I.

This prince resided at Tournai, and was for some time

an object of love and loyalty to the Franks ; but he was of libertine habits, and caused his captains and principal officers so much indignation by his treatment of their wives and sisters, that they deposed him in the year of our Lord 460, when he took refuge in Thuringia, a province of Saxony, where he received an asylum, and a warm welcome from the king.

Childeric did not forego his love of pleasure, though it had cost him his government. Being young, handsome, and courageous, he attracted the admiration of the queen, Basine, whose husband, the king of Thuringia, unsuspecting of the criminality of either, had commanded her to receive the exiled prince with the utmost friendship. Childeric was regardless of the laws of hospitality, and conceived an attachment for his protector's wife, which lasted during the eight years that he remained at the court of Thuringia.

At the expiration of this time the Franks recalled their chief, in the year 468 ; and after his departure, Basine declared herself incapable of enduring the separation, and leaving her husband and children, rejoined him at Tournai, declaring that "if she could find a prince still more brave than Childeric, she would devote herself to him." This false and criminal mode of reasoning was approved by Childeric, who received her, and, as in those days of ignorance and paganism nothing but actual possession constituted the marriage bond, she be-

came his wife. According to the historians who have left annals of those times, the king of Thuringia was not offended at this desertion of him by his queen, or at the treachery of his guest and friend.

This princess possessed so much more ability and acquirements than the generality of her sex at that epoch, that she exercised great influence over the minds of the vulgar, and was believed to be a sorceress. She had three children while she was the wife of the king of Thuringia, and after her marriage with Childeric became the mother of Clovis, the most illustrious chief and conqueror of the Franks, and the first Christian king who reigned over France. She also gave birth to two daughters, of whom one, Lantilde, married Theodoric, king of the Visigoths.

The precise time of Basine's death cannot be ascertained, but it is certain that she survived her husband.

QUEEN CLOTILDE, CLODOILDE, OR CROTILDE.

(Reign of Clovis.)

PREVIOUSLY to his marriage with Clotilde, Clovis had a wife of whom nothing is known, beyond that of her being the mother of Thierry, who afterwards shared some

portion of the government with his brothers by the second marriage.

Clotilde was the daughter of Chilperic, king of Burgundy. During her childhood, her uncle Gondebaud, who was ambitious of wresting the kingdom from the hands of his elder brother, raised forces and brought an army against him. Chilperic was unsuccessful in his opposition, and being taken prisoner, he and his two sons were put to death by order of Gondebaud, and his wife thrown into the Rhône. Satisfied with having thus fed his cruel vengeance, he spared Clotilde in consideration of her sex and tender age, and bestowed great care and attention on the young orphan, whom he caused to be educated in the Catholic religion, which he himself professed without practising.

Clovis, who deemed that an alliance with so powerful a neighbour was desirable, sent ambassadors to demand the hand of Clotilde in marriage. She was then fifteen years of age, and extremely beautiful.* Although Clo-

* The circumstance is represented as follows in a scene of *Odysee*. The Gaul, Aurelian, disguised as a mendicant and carrying a wallet on his back, is charged to deliver a ring which Clovis sends to Clotilde. Aurelian arrives at the gates of the town (Geneva), where he finds Clotilde sitting in company with her sister Saedchlemba, both of whom are engaged in exercising their hospitality towards travellers. Clotilde expresses her desire to wash the feet of Aurelian, who, leaning towards her, informs her in a low tone that he

vis did not profess Christianity, Gondebaud feared to offend the young conqueror, whose very name inspired terror, by refusing his demand ; while Clotilde, who was delighted at the brilliant prospect offered her, and desirous to quit an uncle for whom she felt no affection, eagerly accepted the proposal. In consequence she was solemnly espoused in the name of the King of France

has important news to communicate to her, if she will conduct him to a retired spot. Clotilde bids him speak, and Aurelian tells her that his master, Clovis, earnestly desires to espouse her, and to assure her of the sincerity of his intentions sends her his ring. Clotilde accepts the gift, an expression of joy animates her countenance, she presents the messenger with a hundred sous in gold as a reward for his trouble, and sends back her own ring to Clovis, bidding him to send ambassadors promptly to her uncle. Aurelian departs and falls asleep on the way, during which a mendicant robs him of his wallet, which contains Clotilde's ring ; the robber is found and beaten with rods. Clovis sends ambassadors, to whom his bride is confided, and who conduct her in a litter. Clotilde fearing to be pursued by her enemy, Aridius, whose persuasions may have changed the resolution of Gondebaud, and being impatient to proceed, mounts a horse, and gallops over the country. Aridius, who arrives at Geneva from Marseilles, assures Gondebaud that Clotilde will not fail to avenge her relations, aided by all the power of the Franks ; and the terrified Gondebaud pursues Clotilde, who, foreseeing what would happen, had given orders to burn and ravage the land for fifty miles behind her. When safely arrived, she fervently thanks heaven for granting her the commencement of the vengeance she intends for the murderer of her parents.

by a noble Gaul, named Aurelian, who presented her with a denier, as a token of the union. This marriage took place in the year 493.

Every endeavour was made by the two sovereigns, Gondebaud and Clovis, to render this union brilliant. Clovis awaited the arrival of the young Queen at Soissons, which she entered seated in a magnificent chariot drawn by bulls, and loaded with rich presents from Gondebaud. She was hailed with joyful acclamations by the Franks as well as by the conquered people, the latter of whom were devotedly attached to the Christian faith, which was the religion of their birth, as it led them to hope that the king of the Franks would one day be induced to embrace it, on account of the reputed piety of his queen; and they were not disappointed. Clotilde's fascinating manners and zealous arguments made a very forcible impression on her husband, which political affairs contributed to heighten.

The Suabians and Bavarians, two barbarian nations who, like the Franks, were from Germany, invaded Gaul, for the purpose of disputing its rich territories. Clovis hastened to encounter them, and gave them battle at Tolbiac, on the borders of the Rhine, near Cologne. The event of the contest was for some time doubtful, both armies fought furiously, and on each side there was great slaughter; but seeing his troops hesitate, in a

moment of extremity the prince invoked the God whom Clotilde worshipped, swearing to embrace her faith if he vanquished his enemies. He then rallied and encouraged his soldiers, and, after a severe contest, succeeded in putting the Germans to flight in the year 496.

Immediately after concluding this victory, Clovis abjured heathenism and embraced Christianity, with great pomp and solemnity, at Rheims, where he was baptized by Saint Remi; and the greater number of Franks, following his example, became Christians. The Church, in consideration of this addition to its followers, and in remembrance of the act, has canonized Clotilde.

Notwithstanding his adoption of the Christian religion, Clovis sullied his hands with many barbarous murders; and the queen, equally vindictive, has left in her annals many atrocious acts to attest the cruelty of her disposition. She considered all her own enemies as the enemies of God. Deaf to the claims of gratitude, she excited Clovis not only to murder Gondebaud, but manifested the same bitter sentiments of hatred towards the sons that she had displayed towards the father.

After the death of Clovis, which occurred in 511, Clotilde left Paris, where she and her husband had resided in the Palace of Thermes—formerly the abode of the Emperor Julian, when he reigned in glory and tranquillity over the Gauls—and retired to Tours, for

the purpose of devoting herself to religious observances, near the tomb of St. Martin.

Clovis left four sons, the three youngest—Clodomir, Childberg, and Clotaire—by Clotilde.

Notwithstanding her attention to religious observances, this queen had still leisure to devote to sundry acts of vengeance. She was incessant in her exhortations to her sons to persecute the children of her murdered uncle Gondebaud; and they were but too ready to yield to her criminal entreaties. The result was that the inheritor of the crown of Burgundy fell a victim to the instigations of this fierce and unnatural woman: in the year 524 he was thrown into a well, after witnessing the decapitation of his wife and children. His brother escaped assassination, and Clotilde's eldest son, Clodomir, perished in pursuit of him.

After the death of Clodomir, Clotilde declared his three sons, Theodobert, Gonther, and Clodoald, heirs to the throne of their father; but her two surviving sons, worthy of such a mother, opposed their succession, determining to usurp the kingdom; and in order to effect their purpose they availed themselves of an opportunity to seize the young princes, and convey them away from the protection of Clotilde. Not content with this insult, they sent one of their satellites, named Arcade, to Tours with a poignard and a pair of scissors, informing her

that she might choose between the death of her grandchildren or the depriving them of their hair, as the greatest mark of indignity they could offer to the throne.*

The queen hoped that their respect for herself would induce them to yield the succession to her grandsons, and desired the messenger to inform Childberg and Clotaire that she would rather be witness to their death than that they should be deprived of their sceptre or condemned to a monastic life. In consequence of which these fero-

* The Franks swore by the hair of their heads ; none but persons of distinction being permitted to wear long hair. At the age of twelve the hair of children of the common class was first cut, which was the origin of a family fête called *Capitolatoria*. Conspirators were condemned to cut off each other's hair. The Visigoths attached the same importance as the Franks to long hair: in the year 628 a canon of the Council of Toledo declared that none who had suffered their hair to be cut could succeed to the throne. Clovis and his companions, on returning from the conquest of the Visigoths, offered some of the hairs of their head to the bishops as pledges and promises of protection.

Thierry III. recovered his royalty and dignity, which he had lost with his hair, but which returned when it grew again.

Clovis having ordered the hair of King Caravick to be taken off, that sovereign shed tears at the shame with which that act overwhelmed him; when his son consoled him with these words:—“*Les feuilles tordues sur les bois vert ne se sont pas séchées ; elles renaissent promptement.*”—(CHATEAUBRIAND.)

cious uncles strangled two of the unhappy children with their own hands, and confined a third in a cloister, where he remained until his death, and is invoked by the Catholic Church till this day under the title of St. Cloud.

Doubtless the pangs of remorse hastened the career of this unprincipled woman, who lived too long for the happiness of her people. Before her death she had the grief of seeing her two sons opposed to one another on the field of battle.

It was the conduct of this queen which caused the introduction of the Salique Law into France. The Church honoured Clotilde as a saint, but History ranks her amongst the worst of queens.

Clotilde died in the year 568, aged seventy-seven, and was interred at Paris with great pomp, by the side of her husband, Clovis, in the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, now called Saint Geneviève. She gave birth to four sons,—Ingomere, who died young; Clodomir; Childberg, first king of Paris; and Clotaire, first king of France. She had also two daughters,—Clotilde, who was married to Amaury, a prince of the Visigoths; and Childesinde, who was dedicated from her youth to the church.

QUEEN ULTROGOTHE.

(Reign of Childberg I.)

ULTROGOTHE was a native of Spain, but of the circumstances relative to her introduction into France there is no record. She was married to Childberg I., afterwards king of Paris, in the year 511.

Very little is known of this princess, but the monks, who were almost the only persons in those days who could either read or write, have chronicled her amongst the most virtuous and devout of women; that she was strict in her religious observances, and generous towards churches and monasteries, there is no doubt, and that circumstance alone was quite sufficient to render her an object of praise to her pious historians, whose rhapsodies have often built up the reputation of princes. She lived in the palace of Thermes de Julien, with her husband. This palace, which was the ordinary residence of the first race of kings, was surrounded by beautiful gardens, which the queen and her daughters Crotberge and Crodesinde were in the habit of frequenting on their daily visit to the church of Saint Germain-des-Prés, which was built in the centre of the palace gardens. The erection of the church of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois is attributed to this queen.

Ultrogothe was the only wife of Childberg; a very remarkable circumstance in the epoch in which she lived. Her husband died in the year 558, without leaving an heir, consequently the whole monarchy of France was reunited under his brother Clotaire, whose first act of authority was to expel Ultrogothe and her daughters from the palace of Thermes; she was, however, afterwards recalled by his son and successor Cherbourg. During her exile she remained at Tours, near the tomb of Saint Martin; but on the invitation of Cherbourg she returned to Paris, and expired in the year 573, at the king's palace. Her daughters never married; they were interred by the side of their parents at Saint Germain-des-Prés.

QUEEN INGONDE.

(Reign of Clotaire I.)

INGONDE was the first wife of Clotaire I. She was of low extraction, but remarkable for her beauty and gentle disposition. She was honoured with the title of queen in the year 517, when Clotaire was only king of Soissons.

This queen had six children, the first two of whom died young; the other four were Cherberg, King of

Paris; Goutran, king of Orleans; Sigibert, king of Austrasia; and Clodosinde, queen of the Lombards.

At this epoch, one of the greatest possible marks of distinction and superiority of rank was a plurality of wives, and the first race of French kings admitted of no difference between those whom they honoured with the title; all were wives, and all queens. The offspring of each took rank indiscriminately according to age, and the eldest son was heir to the throne of his father.

It was not unusual for the kings and most illustrious chiefs in those days, to choose partners from amongst simple villagers, or even from their slaves and vassals. At a later period, the fundamental laws respecting marriage portions, and the exhortations of the clergy, who succeeded in inducing them to solemnize their unions by receiving a religious benediction at the altar, gave a more serious and august character to those who possessed the rank of queen; nevertheless, the confusion of wives and children caused by the system of polygamy which was pursued, did not cease until the reign of Charlemagne.

Ingonde was for some time the only wife of Clotaire I., who was passionately and exclusively attached to her, and granted her every desire she expressed; consequently she became the medium by which many favours were obtained from the king. Her sister Aregonde

being unmarried, Gregory, Bishop of Tours, persuaded the queen to petition her husband to procure her a suitable alliance. The following is the oriental style of language he used on the occasion:—"Le roi, mon seigneur, a fait ce que lui a plu de son esclave; il l'a honorée de sa couche. . . . Je te supplie maintenant de mettre le comble à ses faveurs en donnant à ma sœur Arégonde un mari dont le rang et le mérite puissent répondre à l'état brillant auquel j'ai été élevée par mon roi."

At the time of presenting this petition, Ingonde also presented Aregonde to Clotaire, who, thinking he could not better provide for her, offered her his own hand, and the espousals were concluded by his receiving her into his palace as wife and second queen. It is related that Ingonde was too amiable to murmur at his decision.

QUEEN AREGONDE.

AREGONDE gave birth to Chilperic, king of Soissons: shortly after this event, her conduct gave umbrage to the pope, John III., who would no longer permit her to remain at court, and obliged her to retire to a convent, where she assumed the veil.

QUEEN GONDIQUE.

GONDIQUE, who was the widow of Clodomir, Clotaire's eldest brother, replaced Aregonde, but she died shortly after her union, leaving no posterity.

QUEEN CHUSENE, OR GONSINDE,

WAS Clotaire's fourth wife, but very little is known of her, except that she was the mother of the unfortunate Chramme, who was burned with his young wife and children, in his house, by order of his cruel father, for having contracted a marriage without his concurrence and maintained it by a revolt.

The precise time of the death of the four last-named queens is not known.

QUEEN RADEGONDE.

THIS queen was daughter of Berthaire, king of Thuringia, and she was cousin-german to Clotaire I. The latter, having taken an army into Thuringia for the

purpose of revenging the injuries done to his house, gained a complete victory, and put to the sword all the family of Berthaire, with the exception of Radegonde, who, although related to him, became his slave when eight years old. Historians relate, that at this tender age Radegonde was so beautiful, and her manners so graceful, that the conquerors were all desirous of possessing her; and in the division of the prisoners, to avoid bloodshed, they determined upon drawing lots to decide her destiny. The young captive became the property of Clotaire, who immediately conveyed her to the Château d'Athie in Vermandois, where, after having abjured paganism, she was educated with great care in the Christian religion; and on attaining her fifteenth year, Clotaire took her to Soissons, where she became his wife, in the year 538.

There was an ambitious policy blended with this marriage on the part of the king; for in virtue of it, the states of Thuringia were added to France. But whether Radegonde was too young to form an attachment for a man many years her senior, or, what is much more probable, entertained a just horror for the murderer of her father, and the author of all the misfortunes of her family, she displayed the utmost indifference towards her husband, and was in the habit of relieving herself from his attentions and society, by passing many days

successively in the performance of religious duties and severe acts of penance. And at length, disgusted with the licentious conduct of the king, and yielding to her own inclination, she quitted the court, three years after her marriage, and requested of Saint Medard, Bishop of Noyou, permission to take the veil.

Notwithstanding this request was made without the consent or knowledge of the king, and was moreover contrary to the canonical laws, the prelate was induced to yield to the queen's solicitations, and granted her the monastic habit, on receiving which she proceeded to visit the tomb of Saint Martin at Tours; but, learning that Clotaire was determined on retaking possession of her, she wandered for a long time from abbey to abbey for the purpose of concealment.

At length, reassured by the silence or neglect of the king, Radegonde settled at Poitiers, where she founded the celebrated abbey of Sainte-Croix, the first female monastery in France. During the building of this monastery, Radegonde lived as a recluse, in the society of a young girl called Agnes, whom she had educated, and with whom she devoted herself to acts of religion. The stone flour-mill which this queen was in the habit of turning as a species of penance is reported to have been shown to strangers visiting Poitiers within the last century.

Although she had invariably assumed at court the appearance of a most humble and religious person, in her monastery she reigned as a queen ; and her husband Clotaire voluntarily supplied her with the means necessary for her expenditures. She attracted immense numbers of pilgrims to the convent, and all the wise and learned of the age paid homage to her. She possessed great influence throughout the country, although distant from Paris, the seat of government ; and she is even said to have mediated between sovereigns, and dissuaded them from waging war. All the unfortunate flocked to her, and her interest with Clotaire in making intercessions for those who appealed to her was very powerful.

Historians assert that Radegonde was passionately fond of poetry, and bestowed great favour and attention on the poet Fortunato ; a circumstance which, if true, could not fail to injure the reputation of a young queen, separated as she was from her husband. Fortunato was an Italian ; he was amiable and intellectual, and frequently addressed Radegonde in verse, daily presenting her with fruits and flowers. She in her turn made him little presents ; and though these simple gifts did honour to the frugality of the epoch, their interchange has thrown suspicion on the queen's virtue.

Agnes, the lady abbess of Saint-Croix, often partici-

pated in the literary amusements of Radegonde and Fortunato, both of whom were in the habit of composing impromptu verses at table, some of which are preserved, and are very pleasing. In the collection of these pieces there is one relative to which an anecdote is told, to the effect that it was the result of an indulgence, anything but monastical, into which the poet was inveigled by his fair companions; and the verses but too plainly proclaim the condition of the author at the moment they were penned.

Although the Celtic was the language spoken in France, Radegonde wrote and conversed fluently in the Roman tongue. Her letters to the Emperor Orient-Justin and the Empress Sophie are proofs of her talents and acquirements. With the exception of her will, all her works were written and corrected by herself, in conjunction with the learned Fortunato; and many poetical pieces were the result of this association. One in particular, the subject of which is the misfortunes and downfall of the house of her father Berthaire, is remarkable for dignity of style and sweetness of expression; and it unites the most tender expressions of affectionate regret with an energetic description of the ruin of Thuringia.

This fact goes far to explain the reason why Radegonde adopted at court the appearance of a penitent,

and in the cloister that of a queen. She found herself happier anywhere than in the palace of him who was the author of all the sufferings of her family.

The king, whom Radegonde did not hesitate to declare that she detested, preceded her to the tomb in 562. She survived him twenty-eight years, and pursued during her widowhood the same mode of life which she had adopted on establishing herself at Poitiers. She died at the monastery of Sainte-Croix in the year 590, aged sixty-seven, leaving no children.

Radegonde was buried by the celebrated Bishop Gregory, of Tours, in the vault of a church which bears his name. She was considered a prodigy for the age in which she lived, on account of her talents and accomplishments.

QUEEN WALDRADE.

CLOTAIRE, having added Thuringia to his other states by his marriage with Radegonde, was desirous of possessing the kingdom of Austrasia, by a union with Waldrade, daughter of Wachon, king of the Lombards, and widow of Thibaut, king of Austrasia, who was his grand-nephew. Waldrade was the sixth and last wife of Clotaire.

The clergy strenuously opposed these speculative marriages, and also the multiplicity of wives; and Clo-taire, having possessed himself of her kingdom, did not object to a divorce; on the contrary, he assisted in persuading Waldrade to unite herself to Garibald, king of Bavaria. Nothing more is known of this queen.

QUEEN INGOBERGE.

(Reign of Cherberg.)

INGOBERGE was the wife of Cherberg, king of Paris, but her origin cannot be ascertained. She is called by some historians Nigebride. The king was so passionately fond of the chase, that he frequently neglected the queen to follow its pleasures. Ingoberge, who felt his indifference, confided her sorrows to two young girls who resided with her in the capacity of maids of honour; one of whom had escaped from a conventual life, which was displeasing to her, and the other possessed great personal attraction, and is said to have danced and sung well. They recommended the queen to invent some new kind of amusement to divert the king, and retain him in the palace. Accordingly she composed a pastoral romance, in which these young ladies performed a promi-

nent part, and pleased the king so much that he could not restrain his admiration of them. The queen was very indignant, not only at her husband's infidelity, but also at his degraded choice, these girls being the daughters of a wool-spinner; and in order to humiliate him and disgrace her rivals, she ordered their father to come and perform his usual avocation of spinning in her apartments, and then conducted the king to witness him at his labour. The result of this stratagem was unfortunate for Ingoberge, against whom the king was highly incensed; he immediately expelled her from the palace, in the year 561. She retired to a convent, where she passed the remainder of her life in prayers and charities, gave freedom to all the slaves on her estate, and died in 589, at the age of seventy, leaving one daughter, Bertha, who was married to one of the kings of Great Britain.

QUEEN MIROFLEDE.

MIROFLEDE, the eldest of the two sisters above named, was raised to the throne by Cherberg, on the expulsion of Ingoberge. But Marcouéve, the younger, who was ambitious of supplanting her sister, insinuated to the king that Mirofledé was intriguing with one of the lords about

the court—a malicious artifice which succeeded, and Miroflede in her turn was obliged to yield the royal post to her sister. She had no children.

QUEEN MARCOUÉVE.

THE clergy, who had permitted the deposition of Ingoberge, and the dismissal of Miroflede, would not sanction the marriage of the king with Marcouéve, because she had broken her religious vows, and was moreover sister to the late queen. In consequence Saint Germain, bishop of Paris, excommunicated Cherberg and Marcouéve. The latter died childless in the year 570.

QUEEN TEUDEGILDE.

CHERBERG, who was not to be intimidated by the thunders of the Church, married a third wife, named Teudegilde.

One day, having been engaged in his favourite sport, he lay down near a fountain to repose himself after the fatigues of the chase, when a young girl of extreme beauty approached. The prince called her to him, and

professed himself enamoured of her ; but the shepherdess, although much gratified by his admiration, would not consent to listen to him, until he should consecrate his love for her at the foot of the altar. The king of France thereupon espoused the simple and obscure Teudegilde, who received the title of queen.

The reign of Teudegilde was short, for the king died the same year, 570. But Teudegilde was ambitious, and hoped to maintain her rank by a union with her brother-in-law, Goutran, king of Orleans. Accordingly she sent deputies, offering him her hand and her riches. The avaricious Goutran accepted both ; but after possessing himself of her kingdom and wealth, he placed her in a monastery at Arles.

The queen, who could not endure the cloister, endeavoured to release herself from its rigours, and gained the friendship and aid of a Spaniard, to whom she promised all her jewels if he would effect her escape. But their project was discovered ; the abbess guarded the unhappy Teudegilde more strictly than ever, and treated her with inflexible rigour.

Despair shortened the days of this young and royal widow, who died of grief for the loss of her liberty, in the year 578.

QUEEN AUDOVERE.

(Reign of Chilperic I.)

DURING the reigns of the Merovingian race of kings, upon the death of each sovereign the sons divided the kingdom, the eldest being heir to the throne of Paris. This was a custom which created continual warfare, as well as the frequent dismemberment of the French territories. Such a system of division fortunately did not continue beyond the eighth century, having been abolished by the successors of Clotaire II.

At the death of Clotaire I., under whom all the states of France were united, the kingdom was again separated into the provinces of Soissons, Orleans, Burgundy, Austrasia, and Neustria. The wives of each of these sovereigns are as well known in history as that of their brother the king of Paris, but as none can rank amongst the queens of France but those whose husbands possessed Paris for their seat of government, they are omitted in this history.

Audovere was first wife of Chilperic I., and daughter of a French duke; she was remarkable for her beauty and extreme simplicity. As a wife and mother she was faultless; but, devoid of those talents which are indispensable for a queen, either to assist her husband with

her counsel or guard herself from private enemies, she soon fell a victim to the stratagems of one of her attendants, the celebrated Fredegonde, who was born at Montdidier, in 543, and who, although of obscure parentage, possessed talents which were unfortunately but too ill directed. At no period have the pages of history been sullied with more atrocious crimes than those which mark the career of this woman.

Her first act was a stratagem to separate Audovere from the king, doubtless with the view of replacing the queen herself. Audovere had at the time just given birth to her fifth child, when Fredegonde advised her to request the king to become sponsor for the newly-born infant, in conjunction with herself; assuring her that this would cause him to attach himself more closely to her, and would form a new link of affection between them. Audovere had been carefully and religiously educated, and was ignorant of the many barbarous laws which still existed; moreover she had too little foresight to suspect the designs of her perfidious counsellor.

Whether this was a plan concerted with Chilperic, or whether Fredegonde was the sole author, is uncertain; but Chilperic, having become the godfather of his daughter, was instructed by Fredegonde to declare that as there existed between himself and the queen a *spiritual alliance*, to live longer together in the conjugal state

would be a crime worthy of death: accordingly, under the pretext of a religious motive, Chilperic concealed his unworthy desire for a divorce. Audovere was sent, with her daughter Childesinde, to the Abbey du Pré, at Mons, where, in the year 580, Fredegonde caused them to be assassinated.

She had three sons and two daughters: one of her sons died young; the other children, Morovee, Clovis, Childesinde, and Basine, fell victims to Fredegonde's hatred.

QUEEN GALSUINDE.

THE cruel and ambitious conduct of Fredegonde did not immediately procure her the position she aimed at obtaining; for the king tenaciously maintained the resolution he had made to marry none but a princess, and refused her those public honours which were due only to a queen. Fredegonde was disappointed, but, artful and intriguing, she felt it necessary to submit, in order to proceed more surely along the path which was to lead her to the desired end.

Chilperic in proof of his determination invited Galsuinde, daughter of the king of the Visigoths, to share the throne of France with him; but as the characters of Chilperic and Fredegonde were well known at foreign

courts, the parents of this young Spanish princess hesitated a long time before they could persuade themselves to consent to this marriage, for which Galsuinde had a profound aversion, perhaps from a presentiment of the fate that was in preparation for her. But policy, which rules the destinies of royal children, assigned the princess to Chilperic; her father, Aganathilde, thinking the union would be advantageous, resigned his daughter to the French ambassadors, whom he made swear by their swords, in the name of the king of France, that he would never suffer another woman to share his affections; and with a view of securing his kindness to her daughter, well knowing his avaricious disposition, her mother loaded her with immense riches.

Though less beautiful than her sister, Brunehaut,—whom it will soon be necessary to introduce into this history,—she was much more gentle, more regretted by her father's people, and lamented by her mother. Galsuinde became the victim of her father's political views, and entered upon her new honours with a foreboding of the snares which surrounded her.

She made her entry into France in a silver car, drawn by four white bulls; the marriage was celebrated with great magnificence at Rouen, and the king reiterated the oath of his ambassadors, swearing by the most holy relics that he would never marry another wife.

Galsuinde's riches gave her many charms in the eyes of Chilperic, and it was believed that the superiority of her intellect and her sweetness of temper had fixed his volatile disposition. Loved and respected by the French people, she was proud of her virtue and her birth, and believed they were sufficient to oppose every title which Fredegonde might usurp. But Galsuinde, more clear-sighted than Audovere, discovered that Fredegonde possessed unlimited power over the mind and heart of the monarch; and feeling her insecurity near so dangerous a rival, she threw herself on her knees before Chilperic, entreating him, as the greatest favour, to suffer her to return to the court of her father. Chilperic would, perhaps, have granted her request, but he must have returned the wealth which the Spanish princess had brought with her; his heart was too sordid to resign it, and her treasures were the cause of her ruin.

Galsuinde was strangled in her bed in 568, after a reign of two years, leaving no posterity.

QUEEN AND REGENT FREDEGONDE.

No page in these annals offers so deplorable a complication of evils as the period now referred to—an epoch in which two women made France the theatre of

the most sanguinary acts, both of public warfare and private hatred.

Fredegonde's indefatigable manœuvres at length procured her the much-desired diadem. Her talents might have rendered her capable of reigning, had not her cruelties obliterated the glory of some wise and enterprising actions. Her resources for intrigue were most fertile, and Chilperic became the slave of her will; she sustained the weight of government with so much firmness, that until she shared it with him, the king had never appeared so worthy of the throne; but the hatred and vengeance of a woman possessed of such art and unlimited power opened a wide field for the exercise of her cruelty, which she incessantly and unerringly practised for a series of years.

Brunchaut, or Brunichilde, Queen of Austrasia, second daughter of the king of the Visigoths, and wife of Sigibert, had determined to be revenged on Fredegonde for the death of her sister Galsuinde. She was not less remarkable than Fredegonde for her talents, though she did not possess that queen's vindictive temper, or commit the crimes it produced. Brunchaut was considered the first woman of the age in which she lived.

Her sister's wrongs and death aroused her vengeance, and she excited her husband, Sigibert, king of Austrasia, to take up arms to avenge her quarrel in the year

569. Goutran, King of Orleans, joined him, and their combined forces vanquished Chilperic, whose people, burdened with taxes, abandoned him. Flying before his enemies, he took refuge in Tournai, where he enclosed himself with his wife and son, and resolved to perish beneath the ruins of the town rather than surrender. Fredegonde, although despairing, was not conquered; she promised great recompense to two young gentlemen of Thourenne if they succeeded in assassinating Sigibert, and numerous prayers if they fell in the attempt; a smile from this beautiful princess seduced them; they undertook the task, and the virtuous King Sigibert fell by the strokes of a poniard, in the midst of his troops, in the year 575.

This crime saved Chilperic and his family.

Brunchaut, the widow of the murdered prince, and the implacable enemy of Fredegonde, offered her crown and wealth to the king, Chilperic, if he would marry her; the offer was inviting, but Fredegonde, with her usual skill and cunning, parried this stroke to her power, and arrested the progress of her rival, who was detained at Rouen. It was in this town that Brunchaut married her nephew Morovee, son of Chilperic and Audovere. The marriage ceremony was performed by the Bishop Prétextat, who availed himself of this occasion to display his aversion to Fredegonde.

The young prince was the first victim; Fredegonde sent hirelings who assassinated him in the arms of his bride. But that act did not satisfy her vengeance. She desired the punishment of Prétextat for having bestowed his benediction on this union. He was summoned before a council of bishops, and charged with having celebrated an incestuous marriage. The prelates discovered that the charge was an act of persecution, and acquitted him; he was nevertheless banished from Paris by the absolute authority of Fredegonde, who, having once marked her victim, did not renounce her projects of vengeance.

Chilperic, finding himself without rivals, no longer cared to preserve the love of his subjects, whose discontent at length produced a revolt. Fredegonde, wishing to obtain the friendship of the French people, who regarded her with feelings of mingled horror and disdain, repealed all the new laws of taxation; but this act must be attributed more to fanatical superstition than to a desire to render justice.

Her two sons, Clodbert and Dagobert, were seized with an epidemic complaint, which her conscience attributed to the just wrath of Heaven, and for this reason she repealed these unjust taxes, and made vows to Saint Medard; but Providence rejected her compulsory sacrifice,—her two sons died.

Fredegonde was inconsolable, feeling that after the death of Chilperic she would be without support, there being no lineal successor to the throne but Clovis, the last surviving son of Chilperic and Audoverc. This imprudent young man had the folly to declare that he would avenge himself of the enemy of his race, when she should fall into his power. From that moment Fredegonde determined to deprive him of such a satisfaction.

She first persuaded the king to send him to the Château de Braine, where a contagious epidemic was ravaging the neighbourhood ; but Clovis returned safely and in health. She then accused him of loving the daughter of a sorceress, with whom she declared that he had laid plots for the destruction of her sons, Clodbert and Dagobert, by witchcraft. The unfortunate girl was shaved and beaten with rods ; and her mother put to such cruel tortures, that, to escape from her agony, she avowed all that they desired ; namely, that she was a sorceress, and that in conjunction with Clovis she had resolved the death of the young princes. The credulous king required no further proofs to induce him to abandon his son to the resentment of Fredegonde ; accordingly this impious queen ordered Didier and Boson, two of the captains of her guard, to arrest him, and, after despoiling him of all his insignia of royalty and honour, caused his throat to be cut in the Château of Noisi, after

which his body was thrown into the Marne, in the year 577. A fisherman, who recognised the sad remains of this unfortunate young prince, drew the corpse from the river and procured it Christian burial.

His mother, Audovere, who was living in the retirement of the cloister, at the abbey des Prés, and quite incapable of injuring Fredegonde, or of avenging her own wrongs, was nevertheless strangled by some of her satellites; the eldest daughter, Childesinde, shared the same fate; and the youngest, Basine, after experiencing great insult and outrage from these wretches, was left to preserve the memory of the atrocious affront in the monastery, where she died soon after.

Such was Fredegonde; and Chilperic was sufficiently cruel and stupid to look calmly on such horrors. All the property which had belonged to Clovis and Audovere was seized by Fredegonde. She had imbrued her hands in innocent blood, and then added injustice and covetousness to murder.

But the death of Clovis did not satisfy her; she next attacked her own blood.

She had promised the hand of her daughter, Rigouthe, to Récarède, son of the king of the Visigoths, in the year 582. The dower of this young princess consisted of immense riches in money and jewels. Rigouthe left Paris with fifty chariots filled with silver and valuables,

and escorted by four thousand men. Her wealth excited the cupidity of several noblemen; accordingly her escort was attacked and routed, and such of her treasures as were not taken by the duke of Toulouse were taken by the guides, who completed the pillage of the equipages. The princess could not reach Spain, and was obliged to return to the court of Chilperic, without having contracted the projected alliance.

The return of this princess, whom Fredegonde disliked, was the subject of a new crime. They had lived at court on very bad terms, and the queen had provided her with a rich dower to accelerate the marriage of a daughter to whom she was not attached, and was desirous of ridding herself of.

With her usual subtlety, she feigned great sympathy and affection for Rigouthe, and conducted her into some secret apartments of the palace, where she pointed out to her a large chest filled with precious stones and valuable dresses, from amongst which she invited her to choose those which pleased her most. Rigouthe bent forward to inspect the contents of the coffer, when Fredegonde, availing herself of a favourable moment, let fall the heavy cover upon the head of her daughter, who would have been suffocated had not one of her attendants gone to her assistance, and delivered her young mistress from her painful and perilous situation.

In the year 584 Fredegonde gave birth to Clotaire II.

Chilperic having reason to suspect her fidelity, from the great favour and attention she bestowed on Landri of Tours, swore to punish them both. Fredegonde warned Landri of the circumstance, informing him that he must perish by Chilperic's command, or murder him. The same day this monarch was stabbed by Landri on his return from the chase, in the year 584, when he was sixty-one years of age.

From the circumstances attending this murder, the people of France suspected Fredegonde of having given an illegitimate successor to the crown, in the person of the young king Clotaire II.; but she took a solemn oath before several bishops and four hundred witnesses that Clotaire was really the son of Chilperic.

To avoid the indignation of the people after the assassination of the king, she was obliged to place herself under the protection of Ragremonde, bishop of Paris; and, as churches and monasteries afforded an asylum to those who sought the shelter of their walls, Fredegonde shut herself up in the cathedral, with all her treasures. The bishop, who despised her, protected her only to preserve his privilege.

In the mean time, Gontran, king of Burgundy, and Chilberg, king of Austrasia, advanced towards Paris, the former with the view of usurping his late brother's

kingdom, rather than to avenge his death; and the latter, at the instigation of his mother, Brunehaut. Fredegonde's situation was most critical; she was surrounded by enemies and hated by her own people; moreover, Gontran, who had obtained possession of Paris, openly declared that he believed the young Clotaire to be the son of Landri of Tours, and should therefore take possession of his inheritance. Still she triumphed over her misfortunes.

Knowing the warm and generous disposition of Gontran, she exercised her usual art to gain his pity, and at length induced him to take herself and her infant under his protection, as also to send back Brunehaut and Chilberg's ambassadors.

Thus protected, the queen had her young son baptized at Nanterre, and afterwards crowned at Vitri.

But though Gontran had taken the queen under his protection, he mistrusted her too much to suffer her to remain near his person, and accordingly sent her to the royal palace of Vaudreuil, near Rouen. Fredegonde, who felt convinced that this was the result of Brunehaut's counsel, despatched hired assassins to effect her murder. They were unsuccessful; and Brunehaut, to brave her enemy, sent back one of these miserable men to Rouen, whose hands the pitiless queen cut off, as a punishment for his want of skill.

During her residence at Vaudreuil, the hour of her vengeance had arrived for the Bishop Prétextat, who consecrated the marriage between Brunchaut and Morovee. On Easter Sunday, in the year 586, while engaged in his religious duties, the venerable prelate was stabbed by two assassins, and expired at the foot of the altar.

The death of Gontran, her protector, afforded Fredegonde an opportunity of exercising her capacity for governing, and displaying the inexhaustible talent and skill which she possessed.

Brunchaut, aided by her son Chilberg, had taken possession of several of the young king's most important fortresses. Fredegonde hastened to release them, and was met by a large army; she made up for the deficiency of her own force by skilful negotiations; reconciled the discontented by munificent promises; and succeeded in creating a quarrel between her enemies and the Britons, as well as exciting discord amongst the nobles of their court.

At length Fredegonde placed herself at the head of her troops, and led them on to battle. She presented her son to them, and harangued them in flattering terms, distributing presents amongst the officers. "En la voyant sourire avec tant de douceur, ils oublient que sa bouche ordonna souvent des forfaits. Idolâtres de cette reine éloquente et belle, tous jurent de défendre le jeune

Clotaire jusqu'à la mort. Leur enthousiasme gagne les soldats, qui se pressent en foule sous les drapeaux de Fredegonde ; elle-même, superbe Amazone, s'élance à leur tête, accompagnée du vaillant Landri, fier de combattre pour son amante, et peut-être pour son fils."

The complete victory gained at Droissi, near Soissons, in 593, was the fruit of these wise arrangements. She was mistress of the field of battle, and shed much blood in pursuit of the enemy, ravaging the country as far as Rheims, after which she returned triumphant to Soissons.

Chilberg, who could not survive this inglorious defeat, died, leaving Brunehaut guardian of his children and regent of Austrasia ; and thus two women, remarkable for their talents, courage, and cruelty, governed two neighbouring and powerful states.

Fredegonde marched with an army towards Paris to retake it ; Brunehaut defended it ; but the queen of France, always successful, gained a new victory over her rival at Leucofao, and by this means permanently established the throne of her son Clotaire II. After having divided her attention between his education and the administration of government, she died a natural death at Tours, in 597, aged fifty-four years.

In noticing the peaceful death of Fredegonde, we cannot omit to mention that of her rival, which occurred

some time after ; and though Brunehaut's crimes must be regarded with horror, we shudder at the last catastrophe of her life, and the treatment she received at the hands of her nephew, the atrocious offspring of Fredegonde. Seated on a tribunal, surrounded by his chiefs, he caused Brunehaut, the daughter, wife, and mother of kings, who had been betrayed by one of her generals into his hands, to be brought before him. She appeared clothed in her royal mantle, and wearing the crown, with hatred and fury flashing from her eyes. The judge and murderer of the two sons of Thierry had the audacity to reproach his aunt with their death, as well as all her own crimes, and she was unanimously condemned. Bound on a camel, and covered with rags, she was led through the camp for three consecutive days, exposed to every species of ignominy and insult, and afterwards tied to the tail of a wild horse, who dashed her brains out, and dragged her mangled body over the rocks and stones. On comparing the frightful death of this woman with the tranquil end of Fredegonde, who could for a moment doubt the certainty of a day of retribution in a future state ?

Many comparisons have been made between these two furies, who, if they resembled each other in their lives, have left at least different reputations. With Fredegonde rests nothing but the memory of her crimes,

whereas the name of Brunchaut, though it recalls crime, brings with it the recollection of celebrated foundations and useful establishments, such as the high roads which she cut through France, and which are still called "*Chaussées de Brunchaut*;" but in acknowledging that these monuments give the queen of Austrasia some preference over her rival, we must admit that history does not produce two contemporary characters of the female sex so celebrated for crime as these two bad women.

Fredegonde was buried in the vault of Saint Germain-des-Prés, at Paris, by the side of her husband Chilperic.

QUEEN HALDETRUDE.

(Reign of Clotaire II.)

DURING the reign of Clotaire II., France enjoyed some repose. His first wife, Haldetrude, is very little known; she was the mother of two princes, Dagobert I., king of France, who succeeded his father, and Merovée, who was taken prisoner at the battle of Etampes, and put to death by order of Brunchaut.

Some historians assert that she was buried in the royal sepulchre at Saint Germain-des-Prés, others in Saint Peter's Church at Rouen.

QUEEN BERTRUDE.

BERTRUDE, who succeeded her, was born at Neustria, and was of the house of Saxony. This queen was the object of love and respect to her husband and his subjects, on account of her amiable qualities.

The patrice* Aléthée, a prince of the house of Burgundy, conspired to usurp the throne of France, and, to effect his purpose, so artfully persuaded Lendemonde, Bishop of Sion in Valais, that his success would be infallible, that he prevailed on him to pay a clandestine visit to the queen, and predict that the death of Clotaire would take place that year, offering her at the same time his episcopal town of Sion as a place of security for her person and property, and insinuating that a marriage with the audacious patrice would be the only means of preserving her crown.

Naturally simple and credulous, Bertrude was alarmed by this prophecy, and her constant anxiety for Clotaire's safety reduced her to a state of extreme melancholy and despair, by which means the king became acquainted with the conspiracy. The prelate retired to Sion, and obtained his pardon, but Aléthée was arrested and beheaded.

* Patrice, a Roman title instituted by the Emperor Constantine.

Bertrude died in the year 623, universally regretted, and was buried at Saint Germain-des-Prés. During a reign of eight years she had but one son, Aribert, who was king of Aquitain.

Clotaire had a third wife, named Sichilde; but nothing more is known of this princess than that shortly after her marriage, having permitted some familiarities to Boson d'Etampes, the king ordered him to be beheaded, and sent Sichilde to a convent.

QUEEN GOMATRUDE.

(Reign of Dagobert I.)

DAGOBERT I., who succeeded his father, was not so good and simple a monarch as the popular traditions usually represent him. History informs us that he sullied his hands with more than one murder, and his favourites are too numerous to mention.

Gomatrude, sister to Bertrude, queen of France, was married to Dagobert three years before the death of his father Clotaire II.; the marriage was celebrated at Clichy in 624.

In 628 Dagobert divorced the queen, under the pretext of sterility, but perhaps really instigated by his own inconstant humour.

QUEEN AND REGENT NANTILDE.

BEING at vespers in the abbey of Romilly, Dagobert, who was sensibly affected by music, was so charmed by the voice of one of the novices, that he insisted on seeing her. This was Nantilde, whom he withdrew from the convent and married.

Though the king possessed great attachment for his wife, he was none the less inconstant, having had as many as three favourites dwelling under the same palace-roof with the queen; their names were Raguetrude, Wulfragoude, and Berthilde. The former was the daughter of a nobleman of Blois, and was the mother of Saint Sigibert, king of Austrasia, born in the year 630.

In 634 Nantilde gave birth to Clovis II. Far from taking umbrage at the king's conduct, she contrived to preserve his regard, and maintained entire control over his mind. Feeling his strength and health decline, at the age of thirty-two, Dagobert assembled all his nobles at Saint Denis, and declared Nantilde regent, in conjunction with Ega, mayor of the palace.

During the life of this minister the queen directed the government with wisdom, but after his death, which took place at the royal château of Clichy in 641, Nantilde did not perform any act worthy of her regency, which,

happily for France and her own glory, lasted but a year after the death of her counsellor. She was buried at Saint Denis in 642, by the side of her husband, Dagobert I.

QUEEN AND REGENT BATHILDE.

(Reign of Clovis II.)

THIS queen, who was of the blood royal of Saxony, was born in England in the year 635, and seized and borne from the coast during her youth by some corsairs, who sold her for a slave. The mayor of the palace, Erchinoald, struck with her beauty, bought her and presented her to his wife, who became attached to her on account of her gentle disposition, and introduced her at court. The young king, Clovis, expressed his admiration of the beautiful English girl; and the mayor of the palace, in order to preserve and strengthen his authority, gave Bathilde to Clovis, who, learning her noble descent, espoused her A. D. 652. They were both seventeen years of age when the marriage took place.

The sudden elevation of Bathilde caused no alteration in her gentle and amiable disposition; her desire was to be beloved by all.

Her husband Clovis possessed a very weak mind, and

abandoned himself so blindly to the greatest excesses that he died almost in a state of imbecility from the continual use of wine. He named Bathilde regent of France in 656.

This princess, animated by the wisest intentions, maintained peace and applied herself to the education of her children. She abolished slavery, and by her benevolent actions was universally beloved by her subjects. The celebrated Ebroïn, mayor of the palace, was her counsellor, but France attributed all the glory of the government to this good queen, whom they cherished and revered. "The nation," says the Jesuit Binet, "desired that she should be canonized while yet living."

Unfortunately the regent, fearing the ambitious designs of Ebroïn, abridged his authority by adding thereunto two prelates,—Seger, bishop of Autun, and Sigeband, bishop of Paris. This division of power created opposition in the council, and the bishop of Paris, who was particularly attached to the queen and proud of her favour, made a boast of it, and was shortly after assassinated by order of Ebroïn.

Bathilde was so deeply affected by the death of the bishop that she resolved on retiring to the abbey of Chelles.

At that period princesses and women of rank displayed great zeal for a monastic life, and it was usual

for them to build or endow abbeys, even to the detriment of their children's fortunes and from the spoils of their vassals.

The queen, after taking the veil at Chelles, founded the abbey of Corbie, and several other convents.

Still good and beautiful, she did not hesitate to observe with the greatest humility all the rules in the convent of Chelles, and condescended to perform with her royal hands many domestic offices which were expected only from the inferior inmates.

She died in 680, aged forty-five years, and was buried at Chelles. She had three sons—Clotaire III., Childéric II., and Thierry I.—who were successively kings of France.

Pope Nicholas I. canonized Bathilde. “L'âme rêveuse cherche encore, sous les ombrages de Chelles, la royale abbaye où d'augustes princesses couvertes d'une tunique bleue et d'un voile blanc, calmaient, par un repos solennel, le sang ambitieux de Clovis, qui se purifiait dans leurs veines.”

Her eldest son, Clotaire III., never married.

QUEEN BLITILDE, or BILICHILDE.

(Reign of Childeric II.)

THIS queen is known only by the catastrophe which terminated her days.

Her husband, Childeric II., though very young, was excessively cruel, and having been remonstrated with by Bodillon, one of his counsellors, respecting the injustice of a new tax, ordered his minister to be tied to a tree and beaten with rods. Bodillon swore to wash away the stain of this outrage on his name in the blood of the royal family: all the nobles partook of his indignation, and a conspiracy was soon formed. The king went to hunt in the forest of Livry, when Bodillon, after having insulted him, threw him down and murdered him; he then proceeded to the palace of the queen, whom, with her young son Dagobert, he stabbed. Her other son, who miraculously escaped this massacre, was one of those ephemeral kings who reigned over France from this period till the time of Pepin-le-Bref.

Blitilde was twenty-three years of age at the time of her death, and was buried with her husband in the royal tomb of Saint Germain-des-Prés, at Paris.

Her coffin was discovered nearly a thousand years after (in 1646), containing her bones and fragments of

apparel, which crumbled to dust shortly after the opening of the tomb.

QUEEN CLODOILDE.

(Reign of Thierry I.)

NEITHER the names nor histories of the wives of the last kings of the Merovingian race are known—Clovis III., Chilberg II., Dagobert II., Clotaire IV., Chilperic II., Thierry II., and Childeric III., all of whom died so young and reigned so obscurely that they have been called *les Rois fainéants*, in consequence of their slothful and insignificant career.

However, it is known that Thierry I., who preceded them, built the abbey of Waast d'Arras, where he was interred with Clodoilde, one of his wives, in 691, who was surnamed Dode, by some, on account of her great size, and by others Solinde and Cratilde; she was the mother of Clovis III. and Chilberg II.

The other queens, until the epoch of the Carlovingians, were no less obscure than their husbands, who relinquished their authority to the mayors of the palace, first the rivals of their power and afterwards its usurpers. The history of France, from the time of Clovis

II. to the reign of Pepin-le-Bref, is entirely that of these ambitious dignitaries.

During this period the queens lived in retirement with their indolent husbands under the yoke of those barbarous manners which still existed, and in which their lords, by feudal right, made favourites of the wives and daughters of their vassals ;—miserable proof of the power of injustice and ignorance in a country not yet civilized !

CARLOVINGIAN RACE.

QUEEN BERTHA.

(Reign of Pepin-le-Bref.)

BEFORE his marriage with Bertha, Pepin had a wife called Leutberge, by whom he had three sons,—Rapaton, Bennou, and Blaman; and two daughters, Rathaïs and Ade, all of whom lived and died, like their mother, in obscurity.

Bertha, or Bertrada, daughter of Caribert, count of Leon, was married to Pepin-le-Bref at the time that he was only mayor of the palace; but after his accession to the throne, the monarch, instigated by ambition or policy, was eager to contract a more brilliant alliance, and desirous of divorcing Bertha, who was surnamed *la Reine au grand Pied*, because she had one foot larger than the other. But the pope, Stephen III., who visited France at that period, succeeded in dissuading Pepin from his purpose, and the king and queen were solemnly crowned in 754, by the Roman pontiff, in the magnificent church of Saint Denis.

Bertha was the first queen of France whose coronation was consecrated by a prelate.

Haughty and of a violent disposition, she lived on very indifferent terms with her husband, whom she nevertheless accompanied in his battles in Germany and Aquitain.

Her renowned son Charlemagne had a high opinion of his mother's merits, and her influence over him was so great that she persuaded him to marry Hermengarde, the daughter of Didier, king of the Lombards, against his will.

Under pretext of performing a pilgrimage, she took a voyage to Italy, and was received at Rome with great honours, having been the means of adding several of the king of Lombardy's possessions to those of the Pope.

Shortly after she proved the ascendancy she possessed over the mind of her son by the reconciliation she effected between the young princes Charlemagne king of Austrasia, and Carloman king of Neustria.

Bertha died at an advanced age at Choisi, in 783, after having reigned nine years, and was buried by the side of her husband at Saint Denis.

Besides Charlemagne and Carloman, she had also another son, called Gilles, and three daughters, of whom one, Gisele, was a nun; another, Rothaïde, was married to the Count d'Angers, and gave birth to the celebrated Rolando, who was killed at the Vale of Ronceveaux. The premature end of this young warrior, and the en-

thusiastic admiration which Charlemagne conferred on his family by his brilliant career, have given rise to so many tales of chivalry and romance, that it is difficult to distinguish the true history of this event from the fabulous; in the harmonious Italian language the name has been introduced by Ariosto in his sublime and inspiring poem entitled “Orlando Furioso.”

QUEENS HERMENGARDE AND HILDE- GARDE.

(Reign of Charlemagne.)

PREVIOUSLY to his accession, Charlemagne had married Galene, daughter of the king of Toledo, who died a few months after her marriage, leaving with him only the memory of the beauty and graces which had won his devotion and love.

He afterwards married Himiltrude, who was divorced at the instigation of his mother Bertha, to give place to Hermengarde, in opposition to the advice of Pope Stephen III., who was a great enemy to her father, Didier, king of Lombardy.

Himiltrude was the mother of Pepin-le-Bossu, or the Humpback. The epoch of her death is unknown.

Hermengarde, whom the king married out of respect

to the will of his mother, was not long seated on the throne before Charlemagne expressed his determination to dissolve his union with her, and on this occasion the Pope favoured his intentions. The divorce was effected under the pretext that she was valetudinary and sterile. Didier took up arms to punish this affront, but his projects of vengeance failed before the prowess of Charlemagne. To add to her troubles, Hermengarde saw her father and her brother Adalgise despoiled of their crown in 774, and these accumulated misfortunes shortened the days of this queen, who died in retirement, the exact period being unknown.

Hildegarde, who succeeded this unfortunate queen, was the daughter of a prince of Swabia; but although her reign lasted nine years, it affords nothing worthy of narration.

She was but twenty-six years of age at the time of her decease, and had nine children, five daughters and four sons. The youngest died the day following his birth; the other three were kings, one of whom succeeded his father under the title of Louis-le-Débonnaire, or the Meek.

This princess was buried at Metz, in the abbey of Saint Arnould, in 783, and carried to the tomb the regrets of the king and the nation.

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QUEEN FASTRADE.

SHORTLY after the death of Hildegarde, Charlemagne married Fastrade, daughter of Raoul, count of Franco-nia. Her pride was so great that she treated the most powerful nobles with disdain, and caused daily increasing discontents, which Charlemagne, blinded by his love for Fastrade, attributed to disloyalty, and withdrew his affection from his subjects.

The king had disbanded his troops, and this opportunity was chosen for the formation of a conspiracy at Ratisbon headed by Pepin-le-Bossu. A priest named Fardulfe, who had heard the particulars at the confessional, informed the king of the conspiracy, and the parties concerned in it were apprehended. Fastrade, who was naturally cruel, endeavoured to persuade Charlemagne to have Pepin executed, but the king had too much compassion to sacrifice his own offspring; he therefore commanded him to have his head shaved, and to be shut up in a monastery. The other conspirators were either beheaded or had their eyes put out, and Fardulfe was appointed abbé of Saint Denis.

Some authors insinuate that Fastrade was concerned in this conspiracy; but it is very improbable, as by the death of Charlemagne, having no son, she would have lost the crown, and had therefore no interest in commit-

ting this crime ; nevertheless her overbearing conduct made the king many enemies.

This queen died very young, at Frankfort, in 794, and was buried in the Abbey de Mayence at Saint Alban's, but, that abbey having been burnt to the ground, her tomb was transferred to the cathedral of the same place.

She had two daughters, Hiltrude, abbess of Faremoutier, and Theodrade, abbess of Argenteuil.

EMPRESS LUITGARDE.

THIS beautiful princess was a German, and, though many years younger than the king, was much attached to him. Charlemagne was more fortunate in his sixth wife than in any of his former marriages ; a contemporary writer describes her as “ *Admirable par sa parure, plus admirable par sa conduite et ses mœurs, généreuse, affable, et bienfaisante, aussi spirituelle que belle, elle aimait les arts, et s'appliquait à orner son esprit.* ”

Charlemagne was passionately fond of her, and in order to please this great prince, Luitgarde accustomed herself to the fatigues of the chase. She was a skilful equestrian, and, habited as an Amazon, intrepidly pursued the most ferocious beasts into the depths of the

forest, always accompanying Charlemagne and his nobles in the autumnal hunts, which took place in the woods of Ardennes and Vosges.

Charlemagne in 799 placed the iron crown upon his brow, and consequently the charming Luitgarde was the first princess who wore the double diadem, which united the dignity of queen of France with the pompous title of empress of Rome. But she did not long survive these honours, having died childless at Tours in 800, and was buried in the church of Saint Martin in that town.

Although the age of gallantry had not yet commenced in France, it was considered a post of honour to be a favourite of the king. Charlemagne had several mistresses, but the most beloved was Regine, who was presented to him by her uncle, Ganelon, the count of Mayence, with a request that she might be received in the rank of maid of honour to the empress. Charlemagne attached himself to Regine, and had two sons by her—Drogon, bishop of Metz, and Hugh the Abbé,—and a daughter named Adalinde.

He had also Adelvide, mother of Thierri, in 810; Madelgarde, who gave birth to Rothilde, in 812; and Gersuinde, who had a daughter named Hadeltrude. It was to the first-mentioned of these favourites that the emperor gave such great proofs of tenderness, that he covered her with caresses for several days after her

death, and enclosed himself in the room with the corpse even while in such a state of corruption that no person could endure to remain near it, and was at length with the greatest difficulty withdrawn from this object of immoderate idolatry by the archbishop of Cologne.

EMPRESS HERMENGARDE.

(Reign of Louis I.)

THIS princess was daughter of Ingram, Count of Hasbay, and first wife of Louis-le-Débonnaire, with whom she was crowned at Rheims, by Pope Stephen IV., in 816. She had been married to him eighteen years before his accession, and was remarkable for her numerous graces of person and mind. Her death, which took place at Angers two years after she received the title of empress, caused the emperor and the nation deep regret. She was the mother of three kings, Lothaire, Louis, and Pepin, the eldest of whom reigned over a part of France.

EMPRESS JUDITH.

IN the excess of his grief for the loss of Hermengarde, Louis I. declared his resolution to renounce the

world and assume the monastic garb ; he, however, soon became reconciled to the death of his cherished partner, and from a religious motive determined to re-marry. As soon as this resolution was formed, all the noble women in the empire assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, the residence of the emperor, and endeavoured to outvie each other in attraction. Louis attentively examined each, and without being acquainted with either the quality of her birth, or her disposition, made choice of the most beautiful, which was Judith, daughter of Welf, Duke of Bavaria and Count of Rawensberg. This ill-judged decision brought with it its evil consequences, for Louis, though scrupulously attentive to his religious duties, was a very weak prince, and naturally serious and timid. Such a character was not calculated to please a woman who united great spirit with coquetry and beauty. The marriage was celebrated in 819 at Aix-la-Chapelle, and fortunately for Judith, she had the art to appear faithful in the eyes of her husband, who remained ignorant of her profligacy, though it was well known to the whole of France.

The queens of France were charged with all the expenses of the interior of the palace, having arrogated to themselves that power, and were the depositaries of all moneys destined for the payment of the troops. At this period the young and handsome Bernard, Count of

Barcelona, and Duke of Septimanie, was at the court of Louis, and Judith obtained for him the situation of chamberlain, which comprised the functions of minister of finance and comptroller of the imperial household; thus the empress introduced the young minister into her own especial department, and charged him with all her duties. Louis approved of all she did, although the nation could not close their eyes upon her misconduct. In 831, Judith, to the great delight of the emperor, gave birth to Charles-le-Chauve, or the Bald.

From this time the ambitious princess, seconded by the chamberlain, incessantly occupied herself with endeavours to aggrandize this cherished son, to the injury of the king's elder children, and Louis was weak enough to proclaim Charles king over a portion of his states. Lothaire, Pepin, and Louis, the sons of Hermengarde, perceiving themselves despoiled of their inheritance, revolted, and many of the principal nobles about the court, whom Louis had loaded with favours, joined them in taking up arms to dethrone the monarch.

The young favourite had neither sufficient talent nor energy to dissipate the storm, but was cowardly enough to abandon his mistress, and his prince whom he had doubly betrayed, in their difficult position. Judith, not less feeble, retired to the monastery of Laon, where she was arrested by Pepin, who sent her back to her hus-

band, after he had obtained her promise to take the veil, and to exercise her influence over Louis to determine him to abdicate the throne. The empress did not keep her promise, which, drawn from her by force, ceased to exist with the violence which had dictated it. She was constantly surrounded by spies, but nevertheless contrived to persuade the king to refuse his abdication on account of the young prince Charles.

Louis consented to act according to his wife's wishes; but the princes, on learning his resolution, conducted him to Saint Medard in Soissons, and again made a prisoner of the empress, whom they confined in the royal monastery of Saint Radenegonde in Poitiers, and who, on her departure, was overwhelmed with the deserved reproaches and insults of the populace. In order to induce Louis to abdicate the throne, the princes informed him that Judith and her infant son had fallen victims of grief for her misfortunes; but a monk named Gombaud, who had engaged to instruct the king in the rules of the monastic life, informed him of the deception. Accordingly the king entered into a negotiation with his rebel sons; but the people, who had gained nothing by the disorders, and who had compassion for their ill-used and legitimate sovereign, replaced him on the throne by universal consent.

Louis had not courage to punish the offenders, but he

was hardly re-established when he thought of withdrawing Judith from her captivity, and although she had taken the vows, declared them null, in consequence of her religious engagement having been forced upon her; and the empress returned triumphantly to his palace.

None of the reports respecting her disgraceful conduct with Bernard made the least impression on the mind of Louis, who believed her innocent, and was desirous that his subjects should be of the same opinion. Consequently, according to the custom of the times, Judith, magnificently dressed, appeared before a public assemblage at Aix-la-Chapelle, and pronounced an oath declaring her innocence; her parents made the same solemn declaration, and the empress herself offered to submit to the proof by fire, from which she came out victorious.* The charlatans of the present day are

* The proof of innocence by fire consisted in causing the accused to walk slowly over red-hot ploughshares, or to hold the hand for a certain length of time in an iron gauntlet which had been heated in a furnace, without receiving any injury.

Another proof of innocence was to come safe and unharmed out of a caldron of boiling water, after remaining in it a determined space of time.

Those who submitted to the proof by cold water were plunged, well manacled, into a deep pond or vat of water; if the accused floated he was considered innocent, if he sunk he was pronounced

better acquainted with the worth of these proofs of guilt or innocence than the nobles who were contemporaries of Judith! After this circumstance, though no person offered to fight her accusers in close combat, the reports were pompously declared to be calumnious, and the empress had sufficient influence to procure the banishment of the celebrated Vala, abbot of Corbie, one of the principal persons concerned in the sedition.

During her seclusion, Judith had been incessant in her intrigues for her son, and the veil had only served to conceal her manœuvres, so that upon her reinstatement she had the happiness of seeing him crowned and acknowledged king of Aquitaine, by the princes who were the chiefs of the conspiracy to dispossess him.

The duke of Septimanie also returned, and offered to prove his own and the empress's innocence in close combat, but no one accepted the defiance. Bernard did not, however, resume his office, his place having been

guilty, for it was imagined that providence would perform a miracle rather than suffer the innocent to be punished.

There was also the proof of the cross, which consisted in holding the arms extended for some time. those who let them fall first lost their cause.

These, and several other proofs less common but equally ridiculous and extravagant, were performed in the church, in presence of priests and persons of rank, and accompanied with prayers and religious ceremonies, which gave them a sacred character.

filled by Gombaud, who was more useful to the sovereign.

At length the princes by the first marriage, who had been forced to yield to necessity, reunited their forces, and once more revolted. Pope Gregory IV., in defiance of the courageous opposition of all the French bishops, entered France at the head of this league, which was much more prudently conducted than the former, and the unfortunate monarch was a second time robbed of his crown, and again conducted to the abbey of Saint Medard, in 833; the prince Charles was sent to the abbey of Pruyrn in Prussia; and Judith, after having her head shaved, was confined in the abbey Tortona in Lombardy.

But the same circumstances and the compassion of the people re-established the emperor upon his throne a second time, although the crown had less attraction for him than his reunion with the unworthy wife he loved. Judith returned to court and became more powerful than ever. His constant griefs had materially injured the health of the emperor, and she became anxious to secure the succession to her son, before his death should take place. She first intrigued so artfully with Lothaire, and after his death with Pepin, king of Aquitaine, that she managed to obtain the crown for him, and he succeeded

his father in the government of France under the title of Charles-le-Chauve.

Judith was so well acquainted with the authority she possessed over her weak-minded husband, that she followed him to Aquitaine in 838, fearing lest the sight of Pepin's children, robbed of their inheritance, should make an impression on his heart which would incite him to favour their prospects.

She persuaded the monarch, who was ill and feeble, to march against his son, Louis-le-Germanique, in the middle of winter, which unfortunate expedition caused his death in 840.

All the policy of the empress could not prevent a terrible struggle, of which she was the cause, between the sons of Louis-le-Débonnaire ; and in 841 much blood was spilt at Fontenay. At length, in 843, she succeeded in adjusting the differences between the brothers, by dividing the monarchy amongst them, and in the same year died at Tours, aged eighty.

There have been few princesses in France more artful and intriguing than Judith, and few who have displayed greater perseverance, or obtained greater success.

EMPRESS HERMENTRUDE.

(Reign of Charles II.)

HERMENTRUDE, the first wife of Charles-le-Chauve, was the daughter of Eude I., Count of Orleans; and although married at Crecy in 842, she was not crowned until four-and-twenty years later, on account of the troubles that agitated France. This event took place at Soissons in 866.

To this princess is to be attributed the definitive reconciliation of Charles with his brothers Lothaire and Louis-le-Germanique; she was also the means of reviving a good understanding between the king and his sister, the queen of Lombardy.

Hermentrude, worthy of a better fate, did not long enjoy the glory to which such amiable conduct entitled her; she did not even possess the affection of her husband, who was attached to Richilde, afterwards his wife, and for whose sake Hermentrude was treated with the utmost disdain. He would even have repudiated the unhappy queen, had he not dreaded the public indignation which would have followed so unjust an action.

This empress died at St. Denis in the year 869, where she was buried. She left a numerous posterity, amongst whom were Louis-le-Bègue, or the Stammerer, King of

France, who succeeded his father, and Charles, king of Aquitaine, two sons who were monks, two daughters who took the veil, and a third, Judith, who was successively wife to two kings of England.

EMPRESS AND REGENT RICHILDE.

THREE months after the death of Hermentrude Charles II. married Richilde, daughter of Berves, count of Ardennes, and sister to Boson I., duke of Bergundy and king of Provence. This marriage was celebrated at Aix-la-Chapelle in 870.

The early part of her reign contains nothing worthy of note; but at the expiration of seven years the emperor conducted the beautiful Richilde to Italy, where, on being proclaimed empress, Pope John VIII. placed the iron crown upon her head, in the cathedral of Tortona.

Besides her great beauty Richilde possessed a firm mind, and when Charles was about to undertake an expedition against his brother Louis, king of Lombardy, he considered her capable of holding the reins of government; he therefore left the affairs of the state under her control, and if this regency was not so successful as might have been expected, it must be attributed to the unskilful management of Charles in Italy, for he gave

his enemy such opportunities of advantage that Louis penetrated into France.

The empress, who was at Heristal when the intelligence of her husband's defeat arrived, had but just time to escape ; and the night after her departure gave birth to an infant, whom she left with a faithful servant, and continued her flight, notwithstanding her condition.

The emperor's affection for his wife never diminished ; he rendered her the greatest honours, but some historians affirm that she was totally unworthy of such attachment, having conspired against the life of her husband : this charge, however, is not proved, although her brother, Boson, participated in the plot ; nevertheless Richilde's conduct after the death of Charles-le-Chauve, who was poisoned in 877 by his medical attendant, a Jew, gives some foundation for the report. She led so licentious a life during her widowhood that Foulques, the archbishop of Rheims, menaced her with most terrible ecclesiastical anathemas if she did not put some restraint upon her conduct. This prelate reproached her with having given herself up to all sorts of excesses, pillaging and setting fire to houses in the midst of the most disgraceful orgies.

Age produced no change in the conduct of this empress, who, in the year 890, terminated her disgraceful

career in an obscure village, after having lost all her children by Charles-le-Chauve.

EMPRESSES ANSGARDE AND ALICE,
OF ENGLAND.

(Reign of Louis II.)

WHEN but seventeen years of age, Louis-le-Bègue, or the Stammerer, formed a clandestine marriage with Ansgarde, daughter of the Count Hardouin, and maid of honour to Richilde. In consequence of this union having been formed without the knowledge of the king his father, who was greatly irritated, the young and affectionate pair were condemned to a separation, although Ansgarde had two sons by Louis, Louis III. and Carloman, who reigned after their father.

Not content with this forced separation, Charles-le-Chauve compelled Louis to marry Alix or Adelaide of England, for the purpose of setting aside the claims of the children by the first marriage.

After the death of Charles-le-Chauve, Ansgarde, whose marriage had been celebrated fifteen years before, appealed to Louis to proclaim her rights and those of her children.

Hinemar, archbishop of Rheims, and the Pope, John VIII., decided this difficult cause, and pronounced in favour of Ansgarde, who was acknowledged empress, because Charles did not appeal to the Ecclesiastical Court to proclaim the divorce, and Louis, who had never ceased to love Ansgarde, was willing to be reunited to her.

His second wife, Alice, who was the victim of these manœuvres, gave birth to Charles-le-Simple five months after the king's death.

Neither of these princesses was crowned, Louis's reign having lasted but one year, and the time and place of their death are not known.

Louis-le-Bègue, fearing that his double marriage would create discordance amongst his sons, named Louis III. and Carloman his joint successors; but the reign of these princes was very short, and in no annals is there mention of their wives or posterity.

Some historians have named Engelberge, daughter of the duke of Spoleto, as the wife of Louis, but it is very doubtful whether any such marriage took place. After the emperor's death Engelberge quitted the court, and spent the remainder of her life in the convent of the Benedictines of St. Sixte, in Plaisance; she died in the year 890.

EMPRESS RICHARDE.

(Reign of Charles III.)

RICHARDE, daughter of a Scottish king, was the wife of Charles-le-Gros, or the Fat, and was married in the year 877.

This monarch, who was equally unworthy of the crown he wore and incapable of supporting its burden, became still more enfeebled by retirement and fasting; so that some of his ambitious nobles, who were desirous of the post, insinuated that Luitgard, bishop of Verceil, his prime minister, had some culpable connexion with the empress.

Naturally jealous, the feeble monarch soon believed what he feared; Luitgard, in whom he had great confidence, was expelled from the court, and Richarde traduced before a tribunal of nobles, in 887. Richarde protested her innocence, and demanded that it might be proved by close combat, or by fire and water; nevertheless the divorce was pronounced, and the empress was obliged to retire to the monastery of Audelman in Alsace, which she had herself built and richly endowed.

Richarde lived there ten years, and died in 897. Her reputation for wisdom and virtue was very great, though she refused the appeal of her unfortunate husband, who

had been dethroned by his discontented subjects, abandoned him when he was homeless and helpless, and he would in all probability have died of starvation had he not been relieved by his old minister Luitgard.

QUEEN FREDERUNE.

(Reign of Charles IV.)

SOME historians assert that Charles-le-Simple had a wife before Frederune, but her name is not known; all that can be said of her is that she had a daughter called Gisele, who married Rollo, Duke of Normandy. The name of Frederune's father cannot be ascertained, but she was sister to the bishop of Chalons-sur-Marne; at her marriage the king gave her the two royal palaces of Corberry and Pontgoin. Whatever merit this princess possessed, she could not bestow upon her husband the energy and activity necessary to command, and in the reign of Charles-le-Simple the imperial crown was lost to the kings of France; the debilitated descendants of Charlemagne were overthrown, and several usurpers divided this great empire.

Frederune lived in calm retirement, and her obscure existence would be unknown but for the religious edifices

she founded, and the four daughters she had by this indolent monarch. She died in the year 917, and was buried in the cathedral at Rheims.

QUEEN ODIVE, OR OGIVE.

ODIVE, daughter of Edward, king of Kent, and granddaughter to the king of England, was called to replace Frederune on the throne, and had many occasions of employing the rare talents with which she was endowed. In 923 her husband, Charles-le-Simple, was taken prisoner in a battle with Hugh-le-Grand, count of Paris and duke of France; and to avoid captivity Odiva retired to the court of her brother Aldestan, grandson to Alfred the Great of England, taking with her Louis d'Outremer, her young son.

In 924 she received intelligence of the death of the unfortunate Charles her husband, and occupied herself with endeavouring to re-establish his dynasty upon the throne of France. Raoul, duke of Burgundy, had taken possession; but having died without posterity, Odiva used every effort to have her son recalled, and attached the all-powerful duke of Normandy to her interests. At length, after thirteen years' exile, her honourable efforts were crowned with success: and the French people sent

deputies to England to bring back their sovereign Louis IV., whom they received with great joy.

In order to secure for her son the most powerful allies, Odiva remained in England until Louis had attained his eighteenth year, when he sent for his mother, whose counsels he thought would be profitable to him.

By a singular fatality, Odiva, though somewhat advanced in years, became attached to Herbert, count of Vermandois, second son to the count who had made the king, her husband, prisoner at Perron, where he died. Louis, fearing that evil consequences might arise from his mother's attachment to a prince who was the irreconcilable enemy of his house, watched her with so much vigilance that she considered herself almost a prisoner at Laon. At length, in 951, she escaped from her guardians, and this widow and daughter of a king, at the age of fifty years, married the young Herbert of Vermandois, who was only twenty; this marriage was solemnized at Saint Quintin. The king was so dissatisfied with the union, that he deprived his mother of the revenues she had so long enjoyed—an act of great ingratitude, as to the careful education this princess bestowed on him he owed not only his accession to the throne, but the reputation of being one of the wisest and most skilful princes of his time.

Odiva found consolation in a happy though disproportioned marriage; she added the care and affection of a mother to the tenderness and love of a wife, and in the first year of her union gave birth to Stephen, count of Troyes. Her next accouchement was less fortunate, and in giving birth to Agnes of Lorraine, she died in the arms of her young and fond husband, in the year 953.

QUEEN EMINE.

(Reign of Raoul.)

DURING the captivity of Charles-le-Simple, and the exile of Odiva and her young son, Louis IV., Raoul, Duke of Normandy, took possession of the throne of France. His wife was Emine, daughter of Robert, duke of France, and sister of Hugh-le-Grand, and was crowned at Rheims with her husband in 933. Emine possessed excellent qualities and great talents, but she was ambitious and fond of rule.

The Count Herbert having threatened to take possession of Laon, one of the strongest fortresses in France, Emine, in the absence of Raoul, entered the town, and so vigorously prepared for defence, that the count would not venture to make the attack, fearing to be vanquished by a woman, and retired without striking a blow.

Raoul, who knew the ambitious character of his wife, and who, when firmly established on the throne, was desirous of governing alone, placed some restraint upon her power, which rendered the proud Emine so unhappy that she died shortly after, aged thirty-three, in 934. Her only son, Louis, died before his mother.

QUEEN GERBERGE.

(Reign of Louis IV.)

THIS princess was married to Louis d'Outremer, or "from beyond sea," in 939, under the following circumstances:—Louis was pursuing his enemy, Gislebert, duke of Lorraine, who was drowned in attempting to swim with his horse across the Rhine. The Duchess Gerberge, his widow, vigorously defended her fortress in the country of Liege; Louis raised the siege, and possessed himself of the town, but conceived such a high esteem for her intrepidity that he asked her hand in marriage, and obtained it in 939. Gerberge was daughter of the emperor of Germany, Henry I., surnamed l'Oiseleur, or the Fowler.

In all his difficulties Louis found in Gerberge not only a companion in his toils, but all the intellect, activity, and courage of an intelligent and devoted counsellor.

Her husband having been taken prisoner by the Normans in 945, she shut herself up in a fortress, which she refused to surrender till the various negotiations she had undertaken for his release were effected. She demanded succour from her brother Otho without success ; she appealed to Hugh, who could have procured his liberty, but he did not heed her, or retained Louis prisoner under frivolous pretences ; Gerberge also sought the assistance of the king of England : she did not, however, procure her husband's liberation till the expiration of a year, and that after Hugh had extorted from her a promise to surrender Laon. In all these reverses and disappointments she conducted herself with dignity and firmness.

But Louis, having a second time undertaken a disastrous enterprise, was again reduced to the same extremities. Accordingly Gerberge confined herself in the tower of Rheims, which she fortified, and while the work necessary for the fortification was in progress, gave birth to a son. Hugh-le-Grand, astonished at so much bravery and energy, for which he felt the greatest respect, demanded a conference with the queen, and offered peace in 952, which she accepted, and sustained the rights and dignities of the government with great firmness.

She succeeded in reconciling the discontented nobles,

who sided sometimes with Louis and sometimes with Hugh, creating a direct quarrel between these rivals, which she appeased, aided by her sister Hedwige, wife of Hugh, and thus re-established calm in France. The people blessed the name of this good queen, who gave birth to twin princes in the year 954, at the time Louis lost his life through a fall from his horse.

The position of the queen was critical after the death of the monarch, as Hugh-le-Grand became the arbiter of the fate of the royal family. Gerberge sent ambassadors to him entreating his support, and Hugh, though ambitious, possessed a generous spirit; he hastened to her, consoled her with the promise of assistance, and declared that his own arm should maintain the succession of the throne of France to her sons; and though he could easily have possessed himself of it, was contented with the glorious title of First Lord of France, and Protector of the kings; in consequence of which Lothaire, Louis's eldest son, was proclaimed king of France in 954.

During the reign of her son, this wise princess directed the affairs of state, and by her excellent counsel prevented the fall of the reigning house for some years. Her death, which took place in 969, caused general regret. She was buried at Rheims, where she terminated her glorious career.

Gerberge had but one son by her first marriage, Geoffrey-à-la-Barbe, Duke of Brabant; and five by her marriage with Louis IV., of whom the eldest, Lothaire, was king of France. She had also four daughters, amongst whom were Matilda, wife of Conrad, king of Burgundy, and Hermentrude, who was married to a German prince.

QUEEN AND REGENT EMMA.

(Reign of Lothaire.)

To procure a powerful ally, Lothaire married Emma, daughter of Lothaire, king of Italy, and of Adelaïde of Burgundy, who was afterwards wife of Otho, emperor of Germany. The marriage was celebrated at Cologne, and like all political unions was unfortunate. In 986 her husband, Lothaire, was poisoned, and Emma was accused of the crime, which she denied, and, as proof of her innocence, remarked that, as by Lothaire's death she would lose her crown, she could have no interest in committing that act. She also wrote letters to her mother, protesting that the death of the king was the greatest calamity that could have befallen her.

It is, however, a well-substantiated fact, that Emma had many criminal intrigues—above all, with Adalberon, bishop of Laon, a very depraved prelate, but remarkably

clever and intellectual. This intimacy, of which the king was ignorant, added to the desire of governing France in her son's name, give just reason for suspecting these letters to have been more probably specimens of eloquence written to conceal her crime, than the sincere expressions of sorrow.

By an assemblage at Rheims the regency was conferred on Emma, who owed this power to the efforts of Adalberon.

Her son, Louis V., was nineteen years of age when Lothaire was murdered; his father had taken the precaution of having him crowned two years before. This prince was of a violent disposition, and perceiving that his mother's interference and conduct were injurious to the affairs of state, attacked Adalberon's episcopal town, and drove him from it, on account of his disorderly life.

Louis even threatened to arrest his mother Emma, if she continued her licentious course of life; but before he could carry his project into execution he was poisoned, in 987, when in his twentieth year. It is doubtful whether it was Louis the Fifth's own wife, Blanche of Aquitaine, or Emma, who committed this murder; they were each equally capable of it. The death of this young prince extinguished the Carlovingian race, and left the field open for Hugh Capet.

Emma and Adalberon were arrested by order of the duke of Lorraine, uncle to the king of France, and confined in the same prison, where they were treated with great rigour. The queen sued for the protection of her mother, the empress of Germany, and her sister, the empress of Rome, in vain; and the clergy as vainly threatened the duke of Lorraine with the thunders of the church; he would grant no indulgence to his prisoners, until at length Emma effected her escape in 988; but she gained nothing beyond liberty. A miserable wanderer, often without an asylum, forgotten and abandoned to the greatest misery, she died in an obscure spot the name of which is unknown, in that state of degradation which her conduct so richly merited, in the year 989.

QUEEN BLANCHE OF AQUITAINE.

(Reign of Louis V.)

SOME authors affirm that Blanche of Aquitaine was daughter of a king of Navarre, or of Rothbould, count of Arles; but she is more generally considered to have been the daughter of a nobleman of Aquitaine. The obscurity respecting the death of the last Carlovingian, and the contradictory opinions entertained by historians,

leave the exact facts undetermined; nevertheless it is certain that Queen Blanche was as depraved as her mother-in-law, Emma, and that like her, in 987, she was accused of having poisoned her husband, Louis V. Probably Blanche despised her husband, who was narrow-minded and violent; but there exists no proof of murder against her, and it is less likely that she was the author of the crime than that Louis fell a victim to his mother's vengeance, having determined to confine her for her irregular conduct.

Louis and Blanche were an ill-assorted pair; she was animated, intellectual, and spirited; the king, on the contrary, was inert and indolent, and sometimes even retired to a country residence to be released from her vivacious manners, which annoyed him. Blanche attached herself to Godfrey, count of Verdun, and afterwards to Adalberon, when the former, enraged and jealous, proclaimed her inconstancy. It was on this occasion that Louis ended his days by poison; and Blanche, if innocent on that point, was nevertheless criminal on others. Anxious to preserve the Crown, she obtained a declaration from her dying husband that Hugh Capet should be his successor, on condition that he would marry his widow.

After the death of her husband she, however, resolved to sacrifice for a time the enjoyment of the crown, which

she had disposed of, preferring to marry Hugh Capet's young son, Robert, with the view of recovering the diadem on some future day. But her designs were frustrated, Blanche having died childless in 989, before Hugh Capet's death had left the throne of France vacant for his son Robert.

CAPETIAN RACE.

QUEEN ADELAIDE.

(Reign of Hugh Capet.)

ALTHOUGH Adelaide, the second wife of Hugh Capet, was the maternal branch of that race of the kings of France to which the Bourbons succeeded, her origin is uncertain. Some historians say that she was sister to Emma, queen of France, and daughter of the king of Italy; but the most prevalent opinion is that she was the daughter of William III., duke of Guyenne.

This queen, who founded the monastery of Saint Frambault at Senlis, and established a hundred Benedictine nuns at the Abbey of Argenteuil, which she richly endowed, died in 989, shortly after her husband's coronation, leaving one son, Robert, who succeeded his father as king of France; and three daughters, Adwige, Adelaide, and Gisele, who married the counts of Hainault, Nevers, and Ponthieu.

Hugh Capet had also a son called Josselin, who was archbishop of Bourges, and one of the most learned prelates of his time, but the name of his mother is unknown.

QUEEN BERTHA.

(Reign of Robert.)

BEFORE his union with Bertha, Robert had married Rosule, daughter of Berenger, king of Italy, and widow of Arnould, count of Flanders, but the circumstances of the marriage are so little known that few authors recognise it. Bertha was daughter of Conrad I., king of Burgundy, and Matilda of France, and widow of Eudes, count of Chartres, and was married to her cousin Robert in 996. The union, though one of affection, was very unfortunate. According to the laws of the church then in vigour, a marriage of two persons, between whom there existed what was called a *spiritual alliance*, was not permitted. Robert had stood godfather at the baptismal font for one of Bertha's children by her first marriage, and this rendered them *spiritually allied*.

Abbon, abbot of Fleury, was opposed to the celebration of the nuptials, but his efforts to prevent it having been fruitless, he appealed to the court of Rome, as at that time the Popes exercised unbounded sovereignty. Robert omitted to request a dispensation from Pope Gregory V., which would have insured his alliance, but this neglect wounded Gregory's pride, and he excommunicated the erring pair, as well as those members of the

Church who had authorized the union. The execution of this sentence was opposed to the rights of the French people; and the king and queen, who were tenderly attached, and dreaded the dissolution of a bond which formed their happiness, appeared indifferent to the thunder of Rome, and refused to submit.

Gregory V. assembled a council, before whom he pronounced the marriage between Robert and Bertha, incestuous and null; fulminated an anathema upon Archambaud, bishop of Tours, who gave the nuptial benediction, condemned him to seven years of penitence, and placed the kingdom under an interdict until the king should dismiss Bertha. At this period, ignorance and superstition reigned in France, and to know how to write was an extraordinary mark of learning; so that in this state of barbarism the people trembled before the power of the pontiff.

According to the law published by Pepin le Bref at the Council of Verberie, in 755: "Un excommunié ne devoit pas entrer dans l'église, ni boire ni manger avec les autres Chrétiens. Sachez," said the holy fathers, "dont le roi n'est ici que l'organe, qu'aucun ne peut ni boire ni manger avec lui, ni recevoir ses parens, ni lui donner le baiser de paix, ni se joindre à lui dans la prière, ni le saluer; et si quelqu'un communique avec

lui de plein gré, qu'il sache qu'il est excommunié lui-même."

The execution of interdiction consisted in closing the churches, refusing the sacrament, and denying Christian burial to the dead; the church bells ceased, the pictures in the sanctuaries were covered with black cloth, the statues of the saints were taken down, clothed in black, and placed on beds of cinders and thorns; everything wore an aspect of gloom in France, and the terrified people paid such humble deference to the orders of the pope, that the king was universally abandoned; two devoted servants alone remained with him, and those threw everything which the hands of the royal pair had touched, into the fire or to the dogs.

The King must have had great energy and determination, as well as sincere conjugal affection, to remain with Bertha through all these evils. She was not less devoted to Robert, who united an elegant person to most rare and amiable qualities, and who, although sought by all the princesses of France and the neighbouring countries, preferred Bertha, whom he had known from her infancy; so that the bishops, in consenting to the marriage, were actuated by the love of their country, for which they anticipated great advantage from this union.

Although very devout, Robert was too much attached to his wife to yield to the will of the pontiff. In the

retired château of Vauvert, near Paris, the unfortunate pair braved the Roman curse, wandering together unattended through the groves and meadows, and admiring in the pure sky the image of a mild and beneficent Creator.

The irritated pope had the following formula proclaimed against the king, with the sound of the trumpet, throughout France :* “Cursed be he in all cities ; cursed be he in all countries ! Cursed with him be his children, his cattle, and his lands. No Christian shall consider him as his brother, or return him the salute of peace ; no priest shall pray for him, or permit him to approach the altar to receive Divine grace. Friendship and the consolation of hope shall not visit him when on his death-

* “Qu’il soit maudit dans les cités ; qu’il soit maudit dans les campagnes ! Que maudit soit avec lui ses enfans, ses troupeaux, et ses domaines ! Qu’aucun Chrétien ne le traite de frère et ne lui rende le salut de paix ; qu’aucun lévite ne prie en son nom, ni l’admette à l’autel des faveurs divines. Que l’amitié ni la consolation de l’espérance ne viennent point à son lit de mort ; qu’une main chérie ne lui ferme point les paupières ; que ses entrailles s’échappent de son sein entr’ouvert ; que son cadavre demeure sans sépulture sur le sol épouvanté, sans que le pèlerin jette un peu de terre sur ses restes misérables ; que son nom soit en horreur chez les races futures, ou plutôt que sa mémoire soit abolie parmi les hommes ; qu’il soit en opprobre aux générations futures, et que l’aurore d’une autre vie ne réjouisse son fantôme.”—*Anquetil*.

bed, neither shall any beloved hand close his eyelids; his entrails shall burst from his body; his corpse shall remain unburied on the dismayed soil, and no pilgrim shall be suffered to throw a little earth upon his miserable remains; his name shall be held in opprobrium and horror by all future generations, or rather, his memory shall be abolished from among men; and the Aurora of another life shall never dawn to rejoice his spirit." The mutual affection of Robert and Bertha consoled them in their grief; but the porticoes of the Château Vauvert were constantly filled by the unhappy people, who, on their knees, entreated Robert to restore them to the exercise of the religion they so much loved and so superstitiously practised. The good king was desirous of satisfying his desolate subjects, but when he gazed upon his affectionate wife, he rejected the idea of separation; till at length Bertha, more courageous than the king, voluntarily resolved to submit to this generous sacrifice, which was to restore peace to the kingdom and dignity to the throne. Accordingly she quitted the court in 998, and the grief she endured caused the premature birth of a still-born infant, which the ignorant people attributed to a just punishment from Heaven.

Bertha, secure in the love of her husband, from whom she was so cruelly separated, still hoped to remount the throne. In 1006 she made a voyage to Rome, trusting

that she should be enabled to persuade Gregory's successor, Sergius IV., to confirm her marriage; but this attempt was useless, for Robert had already married again, and the unfortunate victim of papal despotism devoted the remainder of her life to erecting convents, in one of which she died in 1016. Bertha left one son, Eudes de Champagne, who became prime minister of France.

QUEEN CONSTANCE.

Two years after his separation from Bertha, Robert determined on remarrying, and made choice of Constance, daughter of William V., count of Provence, who was exceedingly beautiful, but imperious, severe, fickle, and deceitful. Her capricious temper was the torment of the good King Robert, who might have been happy with Bertha, but for the turbulent interference of the popes.

Educated in the voluptuous climate of Provence, Constance had acquired a luxurious taste, and brought a troop of comedians, dancers, singers, troubadours, and extravagant young nobles, who insensibly introduced luxury and libertinism into the court. The affection of

the king rendered Constance so arrogant, that she alienated all hearts from her. The manly simplicity which formerly reigned in the palace, gave place to effeminacy and foppishness. The treasury could not supply her prodigal expenses ; each day she contrived new entertainments, in which she appeared in divers superb dresses, displaying to the best advantage the charms with which she was so richly endowed by nature. She gave directions that all the young nobles should wear arms in her presence, and occupied herself with instructions respecting the attire, accoutrements, and equipages of those who surrounded her.

To all this extravagant display Constance added a most blind and ignorant superstition. She had a dream, in which Saint Savinien informed her that she would be supplanted by her rival Bertha, who would avail herself of the discontents which she caused the people ; and to insure his intercession in her favour, the queen ordered a superb coffin, enriched with gold, to be made for the saint's remains.

Robert could not attach himself to Constance ; he did not even honour her with the title of wife or queen in familiar conversation ; and being indifferent to her, he conceived an affection for Almafrede, daughter of the count of Nogent, and the betrothed of Hugh de Beauvoir, count palatine, who, having discovered the attach-

ment of his sovereign, resigned her hand: the king appointed Hugh to a high post in the government as an acknowledgment, and often went with him to Nogent, to visit Almafrede, by whom he had a son named Amauri, count of Montfort.

Constance engaged her brother, Foulques Nerre, count of Anjou, to revenge this infidelity, and the king having one day gone out with his minister to hunt, several gentlemen suddenly surprised them, and seizing the count de Beauvoir, they assassinated him before the monarch's eyes, in spite of his prayers and menaces. The assassins were soon discovered to be the emissaries of the count of Anjou, who, to gratify his sister, caused the king equal grief for the loss of his friend, and indignation at the affront; and Foulques was obliged to appear before the king and humbly ask pardon for his crime.

Robert demanded a divorce from the pope, but the bishops interfered, and Constance had the satisfaction of seeing her vengeance completed, for the king, fearing that the same melancholy fate that befell Hugh might be reserved for Almafrede, sent her away; shortly after which she died in a convent, in 1017.

It was then customary for the heir to the throne of France to be crowned before the demise of his father, and the coronation of Hugh was accordingly solemnized. Constance, who loved but one of her sons, and was desi-

rous that her favourite, Robert, should supplant the two elder, resolved upon exciting the young monarch to rebel ; but not finding him so docile as she expected, she tormented him, and at length by constant ill-treatment obliged him to quit the court and take up arms.

Instead of resenting this conduct of his son, Robert, who knew the cause of the revolt, sought him, reconducted him to the palace, and treated him so kindly that he made a sincere friend of him. This young prince, who was the ornament of the court, died in the flower of his age, in the year 1026, and was lamented by all but his mother, who felt that one obstacle to her wishes was removed, and the chances of Robert's elevation augmented.

King Robert, although overwhelmed with grief, had Henry crowned at Rheims in 1027, upon which Constance endeavoured to excite Robert against his brother Henry, but she failed in her attempt to create a quarrel between her sons ; and thus disappointed in her wishes, this bad wife and mother conceived a hatred for both of them, and rendered their lives so miserable that they were obliged to leave the court, as their elder brother had done ; and were brought back in like manner by their patient and excellent parent.

The death of Robert, which took place in 1031, gave Henry I. the possession of the crown ; but Constance

conspired against him, and having many nobles on her side, took possession of Soissons and Sens, with several other of the strongest fortresses in the kingdom; and but for the assistance of Robert-le-Diable, duke of Normandy, Henry I. would, in all probability, have lost his crown.

Constance founded the convent of the Augustins of Nôtre Dame de Paissy, and the stronghold of Puiset, in Beauce. Her superstitious devotion amounted to fanaticism; her confessor, Stephen, was accused of belonging to a sect who professed Manicheism, by which he incurred the penalty of death by burning: the queen met him when being led to execution, and, according to the custom of the time, put out one of his eyes with a small stick which she carried in her hand for the purpose, and afterwards assisted in the execution of this unfortunate man and his companions, who were confined in a small thatched hut, surrounded with combustibles, which being set on fire, they were consumed in the flames.

This bad queen died in Melun in 1032, and was interred at Saint Denis, by the side of her good husband, whose repose she had so grievously troubled.

France acquired but one advantage by the marriage of its king with Constance, and that was an involuntary benefit, the result of her vanity, she having introduced

poets from Provence, to celebrate her beauty, before which poetry was only known and cultivated in the Latin tongue.

She had four sons—Hugh, Henry I., Robert, and Eudes,—and two daughters, Adele and Adelaïde; the former married Robert-le-Diable, duke of Normandy, and father of William the Conqueror of England; the second was united to Baldowin V., count of Flanders.

QUEEN ANNE OF RUSSIA.

(Reign of Henry I.)

HENRY'S first wife was Matilda, daughter of the emperor Conrad II., who died without leaving any children; and Henry, at the solicitations of his council, married Anne, daughter of the Czar Jaroslaw of Russia, the renown of that princess's merits and beauty having reached the court of France. The king sent the bishop of Meaux with a great escort into that distant and then almost unknown country, and Jaroslaw confided his daughter to the faith of the French ambassador in the year 1044.

During the first nine years of her marriage Anne addressed fervent and unceasing prayers to heaven for the gift of a child; at length her supplications were

granted in 1053, and she gave birth to Philip, afterwards king of France.

At the death of the king, which occurred in 1060, Anne, feeling herself unequal to support the weight of government, renounced the regency, as well as the guardianship of her son Philip, and retired to the abbey of St. Vincent de Senlis, which she had rebuilt and endowed.

A letter addressed to her by Pope Nicholas II. has been preserved, in which that pontiff recommends her to multiply her donations to the poor, and to establish monasteries; he also encourages her to employ herself, as she had always done, both as queen and Christian, with the duties of her position. But the queen, who had always during her husband's life enjoyed much influence over his mind, as well as great authority at court, found the retirement of the cloister tedious and dull; and having received an offer of marriage from Raoul, Count de Crespy in Valois, Anne accepted the offer, and was married in 1061, although there were obstacles to the alliance.

Raoul, who had repudiated his wife to obtain the queen, was a near relation of Henry I.; and this pair, having married without the consent of the bishops, were excommunicated. They were too much attached to separate on that account: nevertheless time effected that which religious threats and denunciations failed to do;

and Anne and Raoul, who had become indifferent to each other, availed themselves of the customary method, under the veil of religion, to set aside their union, pleading a spiritual alliance, which alliance perhaps never existed, but it was not difficult to produce witnesses to prove it. This marriage lasted six years, and was dissolved in 1067. Raoul is said to have assumed the monastic garb, and became archbishop of Rheims; but the convent having no attractions for Anne, and her only relatives in France being her sons, who were engaged in their own affairs, she retired to Russia, and ended her days in the bosom of her family, in 1082.

Queen Anne left three sons,—Philip I., king of France, Robert, and Hugh.

QUEEN BERTHA OF HOLLAND.

(Reign of Philip I.)

BERTHA, daughter of Florent I., count of Holland and Friesland, and of Gertrude of Saxony, was married to Philip I., king of France, in 1071. This queen disappointed the hopes of the king and nation during the first ten years of her marriage, at the expiration of which time she gave birth to Louis-le-Gros, in 1081.

The king was overjoyed at the birth of the prince royal, and the event was celebrated with every demonstration, both of solemn thanksgivings and gay rejoicings.

After the birth of three children, the king, who had lived twenty years in a state of happiness and tranquillity with his wife, began to give himself up to excesses, and discovered for the first time that Bertha had been more nearly allied to him before their marriage than the limits of the Church allowed, and that in consequence his marriage was illegal and criminal; and he had no difficulty in finding genealogists to prove the alliance, and ecclesiastics to confirm the divorce. Accordingly Bertha was dismissed by her inconstant husband in 1091, and died forsaken and forgotten in 1093.

She had three children,—Louis VI., king of France; Henry, who died young; and Constance, who married Bohemond II., prince of Antioch and Tarentum.

QUEEN BERTRADE DE MONTFORT.

AFTER the divorce of Bertha, King Philip I. demanded the hand of Emma, daughter of the count of Sicily, which was most readily given. The young betrothed embarked in a vessel richly stored with magnificent presents, and landed on the coast of Provence: but the

fickle monarch had changed his determination ere she arrived, and Emma returned to her country to repine over this disappointment and cruel affront.

Bertrade, daughter of Simon, duke of Montfort, and wife to Foulques Béchin, count of Anjou, had won the heart of Philip: this princess was beautiful and intellectual, and so agreeable in conversation that she could adapt it to all dispositions. She was married to the count of Anjou to satisfy the ambitious wishes of her guardian, although the count had already divorced two wives. Bertrade was no sooner acquainted with the divorce of the king, than she conceived a design of sharing his throne; and under a pretext of disgust for her husband, who was old and sickly, she sent a confidential messenger to Philip, proposing that he should carry her off.

The king, who admired the beautiful countess, and was blinded by her protestations of esteem and friendship, which flattered his self-love, did not perceive that ambition dictated the proposal, and favoured Bertrade's culpable designs. They met in the church of St. Martin at Tours, where Philip had engaged to regulate some affairs of interest for Foulques; and during the consecration of the baptismal fonts in St. John's Chapel, while the inhabitants were engaged in the religious ceremony, Bertrade left the church, and, escorted by a troop of

Philip's cavalry, proceeded to Orleans, where Eudes, the Bishop of Bayeux, consecrated this adulterous marriage, which the count of Anjou silently suffered to take place, in 1096.

The Pope Urban II., and his successor Pascal II., vainly opposed this scandalous alliance. Roger, the pope's legate, was charged to examine into the circumstances of the king's divorce, and assembled a council at Autun, by which Philip was excommunicated for espousing Bertrade; he would not, however, separate from her, and the French clergy, who were jealous of the liberties of their church, perseveringly contended against the authority of three ambitious popes, who had been successively absolute for the last ten years, and notwithstanding the thunders of Rome and the serious consequences which might have accrued from this opposition, Bertrade still retained the title and honours of Queen of France. The pope, to punish the obstinacy of Philip, deprived him of the power of nominating the bishops of his kingdom, and, in order to console the count of Anjou for his wife's infidelity, conferred on him the right of electing the bishop of Angers.

Bertrade was unworthy of the king's regard, for while Louis (his son by Bertha) was in England, she endeavoured to procure his death, to insure the elevation of her own son to the throne. Henry I., king of England,

received a letter, bearing Philip's seal, requesting that he would have Louis secretly murdered, or retain him prisoner. Henry, who would not violate the rights of hospitality, to be the minister of Bertrade's cruel ambition, informed Louis, who returned to France, and throwing himself at Philip's feet, begged him to strike with his own hand the son he had condemned. An explanation was the consequence, and the young prince demanded justice, declaring that if he was refused, he would satisfy his own vengeance. This protestation nearly cost him his life; for the queen gave him poison, of which he did not take sufficient to destroy him, and which was afterwards analyzed. The prince would have killed Bertrade, if the king had not interfered and reconciled them.

In 1104, Philip obtained absolution for his marriage with Bertrade, after having walked barefooted during winter to demand it of the council of bishops at Paris. The old count of Anjou was base enough to receive a visit from the king and queen at Anjou, where he entertained them with magnificent feasts, and loaded his truant wife with honours: this despicable conduct so astonished the people at that time, that it was generally believed Bertrade had bewitched him.

Philip's affection for his beautiful queen never diminished. After his death, which occurred in 1108, she

retired to the convent of Hautebruyere, near Chartres, where she took the veil in 1115, preferring to sustain the dignity of queen dowager to forming another alliance, although still young and beautiful. Bertrade made many donations to the monastery of Fontevrault, but did not long survive her seclusion from the world ; for, having submitted to the most austere and rigorous rules of the convent, her health suffered from the change, and she died in 1117. She was buried in the church of the convent of Hautebruyere. Her only child by the count of Anjou was Foulques, king of Jerusalem ; her offspring by King Philip, were Philip, baron of Meung-sur-Loire, and Fleury ; and two daughters—Cecil, who was married to Ponce of Toulouse, count of Tripoli, and Eustatia, wife of the count d'Etamps.

QUEEN ADELAIDE, OR ALICE OF SAVOY.

(Reign of Louis VI.)

BEFORE Louis VI., surnamed *le Gros*, ascended the throne, he was married to Luciane, daughter of Guy, count of Rochefort, and lived with her for three years on terms of affection ; but her father having on several occasions arrogated to himself power which belonged only to royalty, he so seriously offended the prince, that

he determined to humble the pride of the count by disgracing his daughter. He therefore demanded a divorce, alleging that the marriage had never been consummated, and the separation was pronounced in the council of Troyes, by order of Pope Pascal II., in the year 1107. Luciane lost the crown of France through the fault of her father, and in 1116 was married to Guichard, lord of Banjeu. History mentions nothing further respecting this princess.

Louis VI. hesitated some time before he contracted a second marriage, and at length was persuaded, at the solicitation of Yves, bishop of Chartres, who possessed great influence over him, to ask the hand of Adelaïde, or Alice de Maurienne, daughter of Humbert IV., count of Savoy, and of Gisele de Burgundy, who was sister of Pope Calixte II., and a descendant of Charlemagne. The request was complied with, and the marriage celebrated at Paris in the year 1116.

Louis had great love and esteem for his wife, who was in every respect worthy of it: he even united her name with his own in all public matters, such as the compiling of charters, &c. ; and although she performed no distinguished part during her reign, she is nevertheless highly to be commended for the attention and care she bestowed on the education of her children, daily presiding over all that concerned their studies, and, what is much more

important, setting them an example of morality and virtue.

Louis, happy to return to his palace when war permitted him the relaxation, enjoyed with Alice that too frequent stranger to the palace—domestic peace. She had the misfortune of seeing her eldest son, Philip, killed by a fall from his horse in 1131; in consequence of which, her second son, Louis, was crowned at Rheims in the place of his eldest brother. The solemnization was performed with great pomp, by Pope Innocent II., amidst an immense assemblage, and the queen assisted with the king at this brilliant ceremony.

Alice had seven sons and a daughter by the king; Hugh and Philip, who died young; Louis VII., king of France; Henry, archbishop of Rheims; Philip, elected bishop of Paris, which he refused in favour of his preceptor, Peter Lombard; Robert, count of Dreux, from whom the celebrated Cardinal Richelieu descended; Peter, prince of Courtenay, by his marriage with Isabelle, daughter of Renaud; and Constance, who was the wife of Eustache of Boulogne, and afterwards queen of England.

Louis VI. died in 1137, and a year after that occurrence Alice married Matthew de Montmorency, constable of France, by whom she had a daughter, who was united to Gaucher de Chatillon.

After having lived fifteen years with the constable, Alice obtained permission to pass the remainder of her life in the seclusion of the abbey Montmartre, near Paris, which she had founded for the Benedictine nuns, and where she died, and was buried, in 1154. Her ashes have been twice displaced by the abbesses of that monastery.

QUEEN ELEONOR OF GUYENNE.

(Reign of Louis VII.)

WHEN Louis-le-Gros was declining, he received the will of William X., duke of Aquitaine, in which he intrusted his daughter Eleonor to the king's guardianship, bequeathing the inheritance of Guyenne and Poitou to his son Louis-le-Jeune, on condition that he would marry her. Louis, who would not suffer so excellent an opportunity of extending his kingdom to escape him, knowing by the effect of his wise laws that the royal power was greatly increased since the diminution of feudality, added one more benefit to the many he had conferred on his country, by engaging his son to accept the duke of Aquitaine's offer. This condition was not difficult to comply with, Eleonor being very beautiful, and only sixteen years of age; she was intellectual and accom-

plished, but her manners, though polished, were affected, and she was fond of admiration.

After paying the last duties to his father, Louis set out for Guyenne, followed by an escort of five hundred young lords, the flower of the nobility. He conducted his young bride to the court of France after the celebration of the marriage, which took place in Bordeaux in 1137, with a splendour and magnificence hitherto unknown.

Although Louis, who was the same age as Eleonor, was very remarkable for his pleasing countenance and tall stature, she was not long in discovering that he was narrow-minded, frivolous, and suspicious; and, moreover, that he did not occupy himself with the affairs of state. For some years their union was untroubled, although the queen, who was of an ambitious temper, saw with a jealous eye the influence which the abbot Suger possessed over the mind of her husband, and the high authority he held in the government of the kingdom; she was also much dissatisfied at the scrupulous and superstitious attention which he paid to his devotions.

It was this religious enthusiasm which caused Louis to conceive the surprising and unexpected project of wresting the Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels. An ecclesiastical assemblage took place at Vezelais in

1146, at which Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, protested with energy and enthusiasm against the violation of the Holy Land, holding forth the duty and necessity of an expedition to Palestine; and, without considering the difficulties of the undertaking or the evils that might arise from the enterprise, the Second Crusade was decided on.

The king, who was present at this assembly, was the first to decorate himself with a red cross, a sign of distinction which all the cavaliers of the Holy Land adopted.

The queen, who was delighted at the prospect of an adventure, imitated her husband in assuming the red cross, and looked forward with great satisfaction towards her long voyage to Palestine, where she hoped to see her uncle Raymond, duke of Antioch, to whom she had been much attached from childhood.

At the expiration of a year the preparations for this expedition were completed, much to the dissatisfaction of the people, who were burthened with taxes to supply the necessary expenses: the king and queen set out from Aigues-Mortes for Asia in 1147. Many women, instigated by the same principles of curiosity and religious belief, accompanied their husbands; and even young ladies followed their lovers on this sainted pilgrimage.

Other nations followed the example of Louis VII.,

and the whole of Europe precipitated itself into Asia. Poets accompanied these warriors to immortalize the victories of the brave, and the beauty of the fair, by their songs; amongst these was the famous William d'Agoult, who is represented by a contemporary as "*bon gentilhomme, poëte aimable; l'enfant chéri des dames; bien amoureux d'une Princesse, mais près des demoiselles grandement débordé en toutes actions.*"

This numerous army of soldiers, priests, abbesses, and wives, arrived at Constantinople in much disorder, and greatly reduced in numbers. Louis was defeated in the desert of Syria, and soon lost the flower of his nobility and of his soldiers. He found Eleonor's uncle Raymond at Antioch, surrounded by infidels, and greatly in want of assistance. The meeting gave the greatest gratification to the king and queen, as well as Raymond, who demanded succour of the former; but Louis declared that he had made a vow to proceed at once to Jerusalem, promising that he would afterwards willingly lend him all the aid in his power.

Raymond, who was in the greatest extremity, used every endeavour to persuade Louis; he applied to Eleonor, who multiplied her intercessions in favour of her uncle, but in vain: a spirit of fanaticism possessed the king, and he persisted in a refusal, which so incensed the queen, that she united with Raymond to revenge

herself. This prince did all he could to heighten her discontent, and induced her to remain with him at Antioch by offering her much pleasure and entertainment at his palace.

It was in this place that the queen conceived an affection for the famous Sultan Saladin, which has been the foundation of so many romances, and Raymond encouraged the attachment, in the hope of gaining an ally in Saladin. This young Sultan, whom Eleonor saw for the first time at a tournament in the year 1148, gained her admiration by his skill in arms and horsemanship; she presented him with a scarf, which her own fingers had embroidered, and received diamonds and perfumes from him, till at length her indiscreet conduct became so apparent that it reached the ears of the king, who was told that the queen had been seen seated beneath the shade of a grove of palm-trees, caressing the young lord of the Saracens.

It is said that when Saladin declared his passion, she replied that she only understood love in French, and that the young Turk applied himself so diligently and made such surprising efforts to acquire the language, that he was a proficient in twenty days: we may, however, be permitted to doubt this statement.

This was not her only improper attachment. Brantôme says, “Notre jeune reine Eléonore n’accompagna

son mari en outre-mer et en la guerre sainte, que pour pratiquer souvent la gendarmerie et la soldatesque."

Louis, alarmed at the reports which were spreading relative to his wife, conceived a just indignation against Eleonor and Raymond; he immediately quitted Jerusalem, and returned to Antioch, where he entreated her to fly from this dangerous court. Her refusal increased his suspicions; accordingly the king caused her to be forcibly taken from the palace.

Eleonor, expecting henceforward nothing but reproaches and perhaps punishment, acquired a still greater dislike for her husband, who, on his part, was occupied in thinking of the best plan to adopt towards bringing about the separation which both most ardently desired; she remarked, before her attendants, that he was more calculated to be a monk than a king, because he was desirous of introducing the peculiar custom of shaving the head and chin, and appearing in every respect unlike a cavalier such as she admired.

In 1149, Louis, having lost nearly all his army, had much difficulty in re-embarking for France, which he at length succeeded in doing, after having performed various acts of devotion at Jerusalem, which was all the satisfaction he derived from this expedition. After their return to France, in the year 1150, Eleonor gave birth

to a daughter known by the name of *La belle Alix*, who was afterwards married to the Count of Blois.

Louis immediately resolved upon making preparations for his divorce, though eagerly opposed by the sage advice of his prime minister Suger, who proposed that at least he should obtain the pope's consent; but Eleonor, whose tastes were quite at variance with the mystical and serious character of her husband, offered no opposition. All the barons and bishops were assembled at Beaugency on the occasion, and the king presided over the council: the archbishop of Bordeaux was charged with Eleonor's defence, as she declined to be present, and he maintained that it was the queen's desire to comply with the king's wishes for a separation, on account of the existence of a relationship; and on this pretext the divorce was pronounced in 1152, during the popedom of Eugene III., but with a clause permitting the parties to marry again.

Louis VII. is most seriously to blame on this occasion for his conduct; as, instead of confining his wife in a convent, he put it in her power to form another alliance, by which he abandoned all title to the provinces which he had obtained by his marriage with her; which unpardonable folly afterwards produced those interminable wars between England and France, in which human life was so prodigally sacrificed.

The queen left her two daughters, Mary and Alice,

with Louis, and departed for Poitou, which, with Guyenne, was evacuated by the French garrisons, and from that time those places were governed in the name of the Duchess Eleonor.

Her beauty and wealth caused her to encounter some obstacles on her return to Poitiers, for Thibaut, count of Champagne, attempted to carry her off, but failed in his ambitious enterprise ; and Geoffry, count of Anjou, had formed the same project, intending to take possession of her at the Bridge of Piles, and marry her by force ; but the princess, having been informed of his determination, took another road, and arrived safely at the place of her destination.

Some time previously to her divorce, Eleonor, who had declared she would marry none but a real monarch, became fascinated with Henry Plantagenet, duke of Normandy, Maine and Anjou, and successor to the throne of Stephen, king of England ; and she immediately formed a project to ally herself to him, as being of a disposition more compatible with her own.

The chancellor of England, Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, describes Henry Plantagenet as fair, and possessing an intellectual and thoughtful countenance, his smile gracious and amiable, but when irritated, fierce and terrible in his expression ; tall, with a majestic air and good address ; on horseback, easy and

graceful ; having a broad chest and muscular members. Such was the man who won the heart of Eleonor. This prince, who was then but twenty years of age, foresaw the advantages of a union with the ex-queen, and being desirous of aggrandizing his dominions, and pleased with her beauty and vivacity, he demanded her hand in marriage, which the princess accorded with much warmth.

As soon as this news arrived at the court of France, the king and lords foresaw with alarm the great power of the future king of England, possessor of the finest provinces of France ; and employed every possible means to prevent the marriage, such as anonymous letters and satirical railleries, but their efforts were useless : Henry was sufficiently clear-sighted to discover the interested motives which induced them to take these steps, and two months after the divorce was pronounced at Beaugency, he proceeded to Poitiers, accompanied by all the nobility of Normandy, and had his marriage with Eleonor solemnized. Thus the vigilance of Louis and the Abbot Suger was deceived by the skill and policy of a princess aged twenty-seven years, whose projects were satisfied at the expense of the king's honour, and the injury of France, and which was the origin of the evils that country sustained by the long connexion of the two nations, between whom there was incessant war for upwards of three centuries. Two years after the

marriage of Henry and Eleonor, the death of Stephen placed the crown of England on Henry's brow, and the new sovereigns proceeded to take possession of their throne.

The queen's mode of life in England was very unlike her former days, which she had spent in France, in the midst of the pleasures of court and the triumphs of beauty : moreover, Henry was inconstant and voluptuous, and Eleonor failed in fixing his heart ; he displayed the same sentiments of coquetry towards her, which she had formerly manifested towards Louis, and the king of France was revenged by the king of England.

Though she lived on apparently good terms with her husband, the queen was furiously jealous, and determined that nothing should prevent her punishing her unfaithful husband ; but Henry's firmness and determination compelled her to restrain her animosity for some years. It was no longer the credulous and complaisant Louis of France with whom she had to deal, but the proud Henry Plantagenet of England, father of Richard Cœur-de-Lion ; nevertheless Eleonor was not to be subdued—she only waited an opportunity of revenge.

The king's eldest son, Henry, was crowned, at the suggestion of his mother, and with the consent of his father, in 1107, and Eleonor availed herself of this opportunity to instil into the mind of the young prince

that this act of paternal goodness conferred on him the actual rights of royalty, and encouraged the son to revolt against his father, in which she assisted him with her intrigues in the two courts of France and England.

Accordingly, Henry II. was attacked by Eleonor's two brothers, the duke of Bretagne and Aquitaine, and by the king of Scotland ; but that grandeur of soul and courage which rendered his name so celebrated, enabled him to overcome all these opponents : his rebel sons were forced to submit, but the vindictive Eleonor was not satisfied.

English chronicles relate that amongst Henry's favourites was a young lady of great beauty, to whom he was devotedly attached, named Rosamond Clifford ; and to protect her from the queen's jealous enmity, he placed her in a castle carefully preserved by a labyrinth which surrounded it, and which is viewed by the curious who visit Woodstock till the present time with much interest. Notwithstanding the king's care, Eleonor, taking advantage of his absence in Ireland, perseveringly trod the mazes of the labyrinth until she discovered the path which conducted her to the fair Rosamond's dwelling ; where, after loading her with invectives, she offered her a choice of death, by dagger or poison, which she presented to her ; the unfortunate girl chose the latter, and the queen not only compelled her to swallow the draught,

but barbarously remained to watch the convulsive agony of her victim. Not content with this vengeance, she incessantly nourished a project she had formed to dethrone Henry II., and found in her former husband, Louis VII., an ally base enough to favour her resentment.

Bent upon Henry's downfall, this queen became the very soul of intrigue and disorder; and, aided by the French king, she succeeded a second time in arming the sons against their father, and the people against their king; on this occasion Richard-Cœur-de-Lion, and Geoffrey, joined in their brother Henry's rebellion, in the year 1173. But again justice triumphed, the princes submitted and obtained their father's pardon; but Eleonor was arrested by order of the king, and expiated her crimes in a close prison.

At length the good king Henry died, and Richard Cœur-de-Lion succeeded to the throne, his elder brother, Henry, being dead. Richard's first act was to liberate his mother, who, perhaps from a feeling of sympathy for those who were in the same unhappy condition as she had been, persuaded him to throw open the doors of the prisons in every town through which she passed; but, however kind the intention, this was certainly a bad act for society.

Fifteen years of captivity did not serve to soften Eleonor's malignant disposition. Before his death, Henry

had asked the hand of the princess Alice of France, daughter of Louis VII., and Alice of Champagne, for his son Richard, which was accorded, and Alice proceeded to England; but an idle rumour had reached the queen, that Henry intended to divorce her and marry Alice. From that moment the powerless, but still jealous captive, conceived an inveterate dislike to this princess. She represented to her son Richard that Alice had been the object of his father's passion, and easily contrived to disgust Richard with the idea of the marriage; accordingly Alice was sent back to France, not, however, without considerable presents to soften the affront.

Eleonor next proceeded to the court of the king of Navarre, and obtained the hand of his daughter, the princess Berenger, for her son Richard, who married her in Sicily, before he departed for the Holy Land.

During his absence he gave the queen, his mother, for whom he had great respect, absolute power in England. Eleonor was not, however, regent during her son's unfortunate crusade, nevertheless she contrived to restrain the ambitious disputants for Richard's throne, and more particularly John, surnamed Lackland. She was also most serviceable to him when he was arrested by Leopold, duke of Austria, and carried prisoner to the emperor, in 1192; for, notwithstanding Richard's numerous enemies, she negotiated for his liberty with indefati-

gable zeal, wrote to Pope Celestin III., imploring his intervention, and although upwards of seventy years of age, took a journey to Germany to facilitate her views.

Many and great were the obstacles opposed to his release, but Eleonor neglected no attempt; and in spite of the counteracting efforts of France, her son was delivered from captivity by means of a ransom of 120,000 silver marks, which not only exhausted the English finances, but even called for the sacrifice of the sacramental vessels, which were melted to supply the demand.

This was Eleanor's last act, with the exception of some intrigues relative to the succession of the kings of England; after which she consecrated the last languid days of her sad old age to devotion, by retiring to the abbey of Fontevrault, which she had richly endowed, and where she took the veil a short period before her death, which occurred in 1204, at the age of eighty-one: she was buried in the choir of the church of Fontevrault.

This queen had eleven children,—two daughters by Louis VII. (Mary and Alix), who married the two brothers, counts of Champagne and Blois, and nine by Henry II.,—six sons, of whom three were kings of England; and two daughters, who were married to kings; besides Matilda, wife of the duke of Bavaria, and mother of the emperor Otho IV.

During her rule at the court of France, Eleonor, who,

like many of her contemporaries, considered the affairs of love and courtship the principal business of her life, instituted and presided over a court composed entirely of women, where each day they laid their complaints against those cavaliers who had been false or discourteous, and discussed all questions relative to sentimental metaphysics with the utmost gravity: the decrees of this tribunal, which were sometimes most unreasonable, were invariably published with solemnity and executed with the greatest rigour.

The early part of this queen's reign is celebrated for the loves of Heloise and Abelard.

QUEEN CONSTANCE OF CASTILE.

THE misfortunes that attended Louis VII.'s first marriage did not prevent his contracting a second. After his divorce he despatched the archbishop of Sens, with proposals to Elizabeth Beatrice Constance Marie, daughter of Alphonso VIII., king of Castile.

The Castilian king had other views for his daughter, but the facility with which the French kings crossed the Pyrenees presented too much danger for him to hazard a refusal. Constance was accordingly bestowed on Louis, and the marriage celebrated at Orleans in 1154, in oppo-

sition to the protestations of the archbishop of Rheims, who claimed the prerogative of his episcopal see.

After the celebration of the marriage a report was circulated that Constance was not the legitimate daughter of Alphonso, which gave Louis great uneasiness, and occasioned him a journey to Spain. From the time of king Robert a very marked distinction had been established between children born within the sanctity of marriage, and those who were the offspring of mistresses, who, before that epoch, had almost indiscriminately enjoyed the title of wife or queen; and as the object of Louis's marriage was to insure a male heir to the throne, it was necessary to clear up the difficulty relative to the birth of Constance: the king therefore visited the court of Castile, under the pretext of a pilgrimage to Saint Jacques, in Gallicia. Alphonso received Louis at Burgos with great magnificence, and calmed his anxiety by establishing the legitimacy of his daughter.

Constance, with whom the king enjoyed the sweets of domestic peace, lived but four years after her marriage, having died in childbed in 1159, without fulfilling her destination as queen of France, having left but one daughter, Margaret, who was, first, queen of England and afterwards of Hungary.

QUEEN AND REGENT ALIX, DE CHAMPAGNE.

LOUIS was too anxious for a male heir to suffer himself to remain unmarried ; he therefore fixed upon Alix de Champagne, daughter of the Count Thibaut IV., for his third wife—a choice which the interests of policy dictated, Champagne being one of the most powerful provinces in France : moreover, Louis VII.'s two daughters, by Eleonor (Mary and Alice), were married to Alix de Champagne's two brothers ; therefore from this union very beneficial results were anticipated for the kingdom.

With the reign of Louis VII. commenced the era in which France, emerging from the gloom of ignorance and barbarism, gave birth to more gentle and polished manners ; which renders that period remarkable in the annals of civilization.

Although Alix was not in the spring-time of her life, nevertheless her superior talents, her amiable disposition, her elegant manners, and her taste for the cultivation of the fine arts and the poetry which Eleonor de Guyenne had introduced into France, rendered her the ornament of a court renowned for its politeness. She was crowned at Paris by the archbishop of Sens in 1160. Four years elapsed before Alix had any children, till at length, the hopes of the king and nation being almost

exhausted, Louis had recourse to religious foundations and public prayers ; at length, in 1165 she gave birth to Philip Augustus, surnamed Dieudonné, or “ God’s gift.”

The queen paid devoted attention to the education of her son, who, through her excellent precepts, became one of the greatest amongst the kings of France ; for Louis was entirely occupied with his declining health, being at forty-five years of age as decrepit as a man of eighty, and without the power of using several of his members, which circumstance induced him to depart for England, in 1179, for the purpose of visiting the tomb of Saint Thomas-a-Becket, of Canterbury, for the re-establishment of his health. Here he was attacked with a paralytic seizure, caused by the humidity of the climate, which increased his inability to govern, and a great part of the direction of public affairs fell upon Alix, whose first act, on his return, was to propose the coronation of her son. The king, who felt his end approaching, willingly agreed to her proposition, and Philip Augustus was solemnly crowned king of France, with great pomp and splendour, by the archbishop of Rheims.

Louis was desirous of marrying his son to Isabella of Hainault, niece to the count of Flanders ; but Alix was greatly opposed to the union, as she foresaw the count of Flanders would not fail to participate in the admi-

nistration of affairs, which she was anxious to reserve for herself after the death of her husband. All her efforts could not turn aside the king's determination, and the marriage was celebrated; five months after which Louis died, in the year 1180.

Alix erected a magnificent mausoleum to the memory of Louis VII.; it was covered with plates of gold and silver, and deposited at the abbey of Barbeau, near Melun. Before his death, Louis pronounced Alix regent of France; but she was unfortunate in her projects of domination, for with it she drew upon herself the hatred of the count of Flanders, and the discontent of her son. At length Henry II., king of England, contrived a reconciliation between them, and it was agreed that Philip Augustus should pay the queen-mother an annuity of seven Paris livres a day, about sixty thousand francs a year, which was at that epoch a very considerable sum.

When Philip was about to join the crusade which took place at the end of the twelfth century, he evinced the high opinion he entertained of his mother's talents by appointing her guardian of his young son Louis, and governor of France, with the consent of the barons; of which charge she acquitted herself to the general satisfaction. In a difference which took place between two of the bishops, and which was referred to the judg-

ment of Pope Alexander III., she sustained the privileges of the crown of France with the greatest energy. "Profiter," she wrote to the Roman pontiff, "de l'absence d'un prince qui n'a quitté ses états que par piété, pour y jeter le trouble ou l'autoriser, c'est offenser Dieu. Chargée du soin de ce royaume, je dois pourvoir à sa tranquillité et prévenir les innovations qui pourraient y introduire du désordre."

On his return to France in 1192, Philip Augustus warmly expressed his satisfaction at the manner in which she had conducted the government, although her regency had lasted but two years.

Alix built several religious establishments; those particularly worthy of notice are the abbey du Tard, and the church of Saint Port. She died at Paris, much regretted, in the year 1206, and was interred at the abbey of Pontigny, in Burgundy. Besides Philip Augustus, Alix de Champagne had two daughters: the eldest, Alice, was betrothed to Richard Cœur-de-Lion, king of England, but married to the count of Ponthieu; the second was successively married to two Greek princes, Alexis and Andronic Comnène.

QUEEN ISABELLA OF HAINAULT.

(Reign of Philip Augustus.)

THIS queen, who was daughter of Baldwin IV., count of Hainault, and a descendant of Charlemagne, was married to Philip Augustus, to satisfy the political views of her uncle and guardian, the count of Flanders, who hoped by that alliance to obtain great authority and influence, and to be associated with Alix de Champagne in the regency of France.

France, already much enlarged by her monarch's alliances, received Artois in addition, by Philip's marriage with Isabella, or, as some historians call her, Elizabeth of Hainault. Her marriage was celebrated at Bapaume, in the year 1180, and one month after, the ceremony of the coronation of the king and queen took place at Saint Denis, when the archbishop of Sens placed the diadem upon the brows of the young pair, who were then each of them only twelve years of age. This marriage created a quarrel between Philip and his tutor, the archbishop of Rheims, because the members of the house of Champagne feared it would lessen the influence they had obtained under Louis VII.

The young queen thought that gratitude obliged her to interest herself in favour of her uncle, the count of Flanders, in consequence of which the queen-mother,

Alix de Champagne, and her partisans, excited the king against his wife. They persuaded him that her friendship for her uncle was very suspicious, and likely to be injurious to the kingdom, and calumniated the innocent actions of this young queen, who at the age of fourteen was deprived of both counsel and support. The king at first treated her with indifference and at length declared openly his sentiments of aversion for her, and compelled her to retire to a monastery at Senlis in the year 1183.

Isabella contrived to excite the sympathy of the bishop of Senlis, who alone ventured to become her champion. Abandoned and despised by Philip, she was on the eve of being divorced; but her prudence and resignation assisted her in sustaining adversity with a modest courage, and her constancy enabled her to triumph over her enemies. Her father, the count of Hainault, went to Pontoise to visit her, and persuaded her to write to her husband and explain her conduct. Philip was satisfied, and recalled Isabella, after three years' exile, in 1186. He was perhaps partly actuated by selfish motives, as he would have been obliged to give up Artois if he had obtained a divorce; but by degrees Isabella's conduct gave rise to other sentiments, and Philip began for the first time to feel an attachment for his wife. She was then eighteen years of age, and twelve

months after this reconciliation gave birth to Louis VIII. at Paris, in 1187. Such was the enthusiasm of the people of the town for Isabella, that for seven days they celebrated the event with every possible demonstration of rejoicing; the French people looked upon her as the offspring of Charlemagne, and she had not only gained the love of the people, but her amiable conduct had obtained the esteem of her mother-in-law, who deeply repented of her injustice, and repaired the injury she had done her by numerous tokens of sincere friendship.

Isabella's happiness lasted but a short time, for in 1189, at the period when Philip Augustus was about to undertake the third crusade, he had the misfortune of losing his young wife; she died in giving birth to twins, who did not survive her. Isabella left but one son, Louis, afterwards king of France. This princess, who lived only twenty-two years, was interred with great pomp in the choir of the church of Notre-Dame-de-Paris.

QUEENS INGBORGE OF DENMARK, AND AGNES OF MERANIE.

INGBORGE, called in France Ingoberge or Engelberge, was daughter of Woldemar, king of Denmark, born in 1176, and affianced first to the son of the emperor Fre-

derick I.; but the marriage not having taken place, the young princess was married to Philip Augustus in the year 1193, for the purpose of contracting a formidable alliance against England. The bishop of Nogon, and the counts of Nevers and Montmorenci, were sent to demand the hand of Ingborge, which was willingly accorded; but the two French nobles were retained as hostages in Denmark, until the marriage of the princess should have actually taken place.

Philip went to Amiens to meet the princess, dressed in full armour and mounted on his war-horse, and she entered the town followed by her female attendants, all on horseback. She was married the same day, and crowned on the one following; and having received four thousand silver marks from her father, the fetes were very magnificent. But on the day which succeeded her coronation, the king made some frivolous excuse to dissolve the union, although the queen was very beautiful, and particularly remarkable for her fine head of hair, and the exquisite form of her hands and arms.

She was immediately repudiated, and at the age of seventeen years sent an exile into Flanders. For some time Ingborge resided at the abbey of Cisoin, near Lille, in a state of captivity so nearly allied to indigence, that it reflects shame on the memory of Philip Augustus. Left to obtain her livelihood by manual labour, this

beautiful and noble captive, far from murmuring at her fate, implored Heaven's forgiveness for the husband who persecuted her. In the bosom of poverty she preserved an elevated spirit, and, queen amidst all her misfortunes, she indignantly refused to renounce her title to the rights and honours of the crown of France.

Nevertheless the divorce was pronounced by an assemblage of barons and bishops at Compiègne, under the ridiculous pretext of relationship, in the year 1194; and Ingborge wept bitterly when the interpreters signified to her that her marriage was dissolved: her only reply was "*Mauvaise France!*" The venerable Stephen of Tournai carried the appeal of this iniquitous sentence to Rome, and Ingborge's brother, Canute VI., king of Denmark, imprisoned the hostages.

Philip Augustus, who considered that the union was entirely dissolved, espoused at Compiègne, in 1196, Mary Agnes de Meranie, the daughter of a French duke and a descendant of Charlemagne; this princess was exceedingly beautiful and talented, graceful and virtuous. The king was very much enamoured with Agnes, who accompanied him in his hunting excursions, and was the ornament of the palace, and the theme of minstrelsy among the troubadours and poets; the barons entitled her "*La Fleur des Dames.*"

In the mean time Ingborge maintained her dignified

character ; she was neither subdued by her unjust banishment nor by her poverty, which was far more dishonourable to Philip than to herself, and she obstinately refused to resign the double title of wife and queen. Many persons were touched with sympathy for her misfortunes, and admiration for her resignation, and even the most insensible interested themselves in favour of this injured queen. Several of the bishops who pronounced her divorce became her partisans, and the King of Denmark, taking advantage of the general feeling in her favour, sent ambassadors to Rome to represent to Pope Celestin III. the outrage that had been offered to his sister, upon which the pontiff repealed the sentence of divorce pronounced at Compiègne, and declared the marriage of Philip with Agnes de Meranie to be null.

Innocent III., his successor, followed up the affair which his predecessor had taken in hand, and wrote to the king desiring him to reinstate his wife ; this command not being complied with, he threatened France with an interdiction. Philip, instead of submitting, revenged himself on the clergy and nobility, whose goods he confiscated, and above all upon poor Ingberge, whose unhappiness he augmented by sending her to the Château d'Etamps, where she suffered all the misery of a most

rigorous captivity; nevertheless the unfortunate queen maintained her firmness.

In consequence of Philip's conduct, the kingdom was placed under an interdict in the year 1199, which lasted eight months, and, as usual, the disastrous consequences it entailed, caused the whole of France to murmur, for all ranks and conditions were alike discontented.

Philip, who saw his throne shaken by the bulls of Innocent III., and that the disorders were increasing daily, feared that the result might be serious, and professed humiliation and resignation to the will of the pontiff; accordingly his legate, the cardinal of St. Sabine, bishop of Ostie, withdrew the interdict, but upon condition that King Philip would have the cause of the divorce solemnly judged and pleaded *in six months, six weeks, six days, and six hours*.

Ingborge had the privilege of choosing the place of assemblage, and fixed on Soissons, where she appeared in the court, as also did the king. The case was proclaimed with solemnity and regularity, when a young stranger advanced and asked permission of the queen to undertake her defence. Philip himself could not refrain from admiring the lofty courage and simplicity of this unknown orator, who pleaded the cause with so much warmth and energy that the judges were persuaded, and the audience loudly applauded, but not before the mys-

terious defender had disappeared. Philip, foreseeing the issue of the proceedings, and not choosing that royal majesty should be submitted to human judgment, hastened to the convent to which Ingborge had retired, embraced her, placed her on his horse behind him, and conducted her to Paris, where he publicly acknowledged her as wife and queen, in the year 1201.

Agnes de Meranie, to whom no slight merit was due for having fixed the heart of the inconstant Philip five years, was no sooner informed of her undeserved and unexpected disgrace than she retired to the Château de Poissy, where, in a few weeks, she sunk under the weight of her grief in giving birth to a son, who received the name of Tristan.

Innocent III., desiring to repair a part of the evil that had fallen upon her by the sentence of divorce, and considering that her marriage had been celebrated according to rule and in good faith, pronounced the two children she had by Philip, legitimate. They were Mary, who afterwards married Henry IV., duke of Brabant, and Tristan, count of Clermont.

The political considerations which had obliged Philip to restore Ingborge, could have no influence over his sentiments towards her; he for some time assumed an appearance of regard, but, in reality, his aversion was such that he again confined her in the Château d'Etamps,

in 1210. He even declared his determination to marry the daughter of the Count of Thuringia, provided he could obtain the Pope's consent to divorce Ingborge; but his negotiation to that purpose met with a refusal, and Philip again reinstated Ingborge.

This ill-used queen survived the capricious monarch, who had rendered three amiable women most unhappy. After his death she retired to Corbeil, where she died in 1236, aged sixty-two years.

QUEEN AND REGENT BLANCHE, OF CASTILE.

(Reign of Louis VIII.)

THIS queen, so justly celebrated for her talents in the administration of government, as well as her lofty character and the excellent education her son received under her direction, was granddaughter of Eleonor of Guyenne. She was born at Burgos in Spain in 1185, and was the daughter of Alphonso IX., King of Castile, and of Eleonor, daughter of Henry II., of England. The offer of the marriage was made by her grandmother, Eleonor of Guyenne, Queen of England, who, after the ceremony of betrothing, which took place at Burgos with great pomp, accompanied her to France. Alphonso himself

conducted his daughter as far as the frontiers of France, where she was met by Matthew de Montmorenci, Constable of France, and other persons of consequence who were charged to receive her.

Blanche was surnamed *Candide* on account of her innocence, beauty, and youth, being only fifteen years of age when she arrived at the court of France to espouse the hereditary prince, Louis VIII., in the year 1200; but the kingdom being at that time under an interdict on account of Philip Augustus's divorce from Ingborge, her uncle John, king of England, conducted her to Normandy, which was at that time an English possession, and the marriage was solemnized by the archbishop of Bourges.

This union was the result of one of the articles in the treaty of Vernon, which had been concluded between the French and English, and as the messenger of peace Blanche was welcomed with enthusiasm. Her education had been carefully attended to, and her studies well directed; independently of the attractions of her personal appearance she possessed the qualities of a wise politician, so that her father-in-law, Philip Augustus, often consulted her.

It was a somewhat remarkable circumstance that caused Blanche, who was the youngest daughter of the house of Castile, to be preferred before her elder sister Uraeca,

who was still more beautiful; but after several conferences it was decided that the name of Uracca being less euphonious than that of Blanche, the latter would be more agreeable to the French people, and the ambassadors placed their choice on Blanche accordingly.

The alliance could hardly fail to be a happy one, Louis VIII. being of a mild and amiable disposition; moreover it was an inestimable benefit to the nation, because John, king of England, who tenderly loved Blanche, declared her the inheritor of all his French possessions, provided he died without legitimate children.

Philip Augustus's death, which occurred in 1223, placed Louis VIII. on the throne, and Blanche was crowned and consecrated with her husband at Rheims, in the midst of a most brilliant assemblage of princes and barons, and the event was celebrated by a succession of magnificent entertainments. On the return of the king and queen from this ceremony they were received at Paris with the greatest enthusiasm, according to a French historian:—"Toute la ville sortit au-devant des monarques; les poètes chantaient des odes à sa louange, les musiciens faisaient retentir l'air du son de la vielle, des fifres, du tambour, du psaltérion, et de la harpe. Aristote se tut, Platon fit silence, et les philosophes déposèrent pour un moment l'esprit de dispute."

During the reign of Philip Augustus, Blanche never

quitted her husband during his trouble and isolation, or took any part in the government, being at that time remarkable only for her intellectual accomplishments and serious character.

The epoch in which she reigned in France, although one of religious enthusiasm and exaggeration, was a period in which chivalry flourished in all its brilliancy; the youths of distinction were early instructed in bodily exercises, riding, hunting, and the use of arms, as well as the etiquette of the toilette and table, and the art of rendering themselves agreeable to the ladies; and mothers accustomed their daughters to receive these respectful and delicate attentions with an affability which was not derogatory to modesty. The glory of the women consisted in excelling in the art of needle-work, in embroidering rich carpets, and making the dresses of their husbands and male relatives. The manufacture of confectionary and delicacies for the table was their amusement, as also the preparation of unguents and the extraction of balsams necessary to cure the wounds of the cavaliers. Nevertheless the intellectual part of the education of both sexes was neglected, and it was not at all uncommon to find cavaliers of rank and ladies of quality who were unable to read.

Having determined to undertake the unfortunate and absurd expedition against the Albigeois, Louis named

Blanche regent before his departure. He was accompanied by Thibault, count of Champagne, who was greatly enamoured of the queen, and had been most assiduous in his attentions to her ; but he, feeling unable to support his absence from her, left the king's camp at Avignon, and returned to Paris. It has been said that Louis, in a jealous transport, having menaced the count of Champagne with his resentment, Thibault caused his sovereign to be poisoned. History does not, however, credit the truth of this event, there being no proof ; nevertheless the king died shortly after the count's departure, in 1226, after a reign of three years. The will of Louis VIII. did not confer the regency upon the queen, but, animated by an ardent desire to govern, she immediately took steps to insure the sovereign authority to herself, and accordingly assembled all the most powerful barons who were attached to her, amongst whom was Saint-Ange, the pope's legate. The bishops who attended on the king during his last moments at the Château Montpensier, attested upon oath that in dying he had invested her with that dignity, and pronounced her the guardian of his children. The count of Champagne, who was not included in the council assembled to decide the regency, displayed great discontent, either real or affected. This prince is represented as tall and handsome, very skilful in all chivalrous exercises, gene-

rous and pompous, inconstant and rash. He had great taste for poetry, which he cultivated with success; several of his attempts are still in existence; he, moreover, possessed a sweet voice, and wrote many agreeable sonnets.

It is true all Thibault's poems celebrated the beauty and worth of Queen Blanche without naming her, and this discretion is a great proof that she was the object of his love; for if the count of Champagne had not addressed his poetical inspirations to the queen of France, he need not have concealed the name of his inamorata in his verses: however, there is no proof of a mutual affection, and if any existed, it was so carefully veiled that, in defiance of the observing eyes of the court, the nature and circumstances of their attachment still remain a mystery.

Thibault united with several of the barons who objected to Blanche being invested with the government, and desired to transfer the regency on the young king's paternal uncle, Philip count of Boulogne; they accordingly refused to assist at the consecration of her son. The irritated regent assembled her troops and marched to the vacant episcopal see of Rheims, where her son, Louis IX., was crowned by the bishop of Soissons.

The league formed against the queen was very formidable; it was headed by Engerrand de Couci, and con-

sisted, amongst others, of the counts of Dreux, Toulouse, and Ponthieu; Hugh de Lusignan, count of Marche; and Hugh de Chatillon, count of Saint Pol. Blanche did not long suffer the storm to gather; she placed herself with her son, then only thirteen years of age, at the head of a numerous army, and entered Brittany, which was the place of conspiracy. The rebellious lords, who were not prepared to repulse the regent's forces, deputed the count of Champagne to seek a reconciliation. No emissary could have been more agreeable to the queen, who after some reproaches granted his demand.

The discontented barons were, however, only tranquilized for a short period; they again united to dispossess Blanche of the regency, and concerted their measures on this occasion with greater precaution. The queen used every endeavour to detach two of the confederates from the league formed against her; these were the counts of Boulogne and Champagne. A little address enabled her to achieve her wishes: she persuaded Philip that he would gain nothing by the revolt, as they had determined to place Couci at their head, and that he was fighting against his nephew, without the hope of benefiting himself. As for Thibault, he was but a feeble enemy for Blanche! One gracious epistle brought him to her feet; not only did he abandon his friends,

but revealed all their secrets to the lady of his heart, and drew over others by presents and promises.

The disappointed conspirators turned their fury against the count of Champagne, and did not even spare the reputation of the queen. They attempted to seize the king and regent on their route to Orleans, but Thibault secretly warned Blanche in time for them to retire to the fortress of Mont l'Héri; from thence she sent information to the capital of the situation of the king, and the people immediately flew to their succour and conducted them in triumph to Paris.

At length the league, calculating on the inconstant and volatile disposition of Thibault, endeavoured to seduce him from the queen by offering him Yolande, the daughter of the duke of Bretagne, who was at their head, in marriage. This princess was very beautiful and rich, and the count of Champagne accepted the offer. Blanche was only informed of this danger by the preparations for the marriage fête, when she hastily despatched the lord of La Chappelle to him with the following billet, which has been preserved amongst the ancient charters:—

“Sire Thibault de Champagne, j’ai entendu que vous avez convenance et promis prendre à femme, la fille du Comte Pierre de Bretagne; pourtant vous mande qui si chier vous avez tout tant qu’aimez au royaume de

France, que ne le faciez pas. La raison pourquoi vous savez bien."

Thus Blanche, in order to prevent an alliance which interfered with her projects and wounded her feelings, persuaded the unsteady Thibault that if he loved France he should not form an alliance that was agreeable to him! Blanche did not overrate the powerful influence of her attractions; her self-love triumphed, and the marriage was set aside. After this affront, the league became still more inveterate against the count, and the people murmured at being governed by a Spanish woman and an Italian priest; for the cardinal St. Ange was invested with unlimited power, and honoured with the queen's especial favour. Blanche again quieted the storm with her usual ability; she promised honours to one, accorded a smile to another, and contrived to reconcile all her enemies within and without.

In 1227 she confirmed an alliance with the emperor Frederick II., made a truce with England, and, by a treaty with the duke of Brittany, engaged his daughter Yolande, whose rivalry she had formerly dreaded, for her son John's affianced wife.

After these skilful negotiations, Blanche turned her thoughts towards vanquishing her cousin-german, Raymond VII., count of Toulouse, who was still in rebellion, which she accomplished, and took him prisoner; she

treated him with severe rigour, having obliged him to ask the king's pardon, after cruelly despoiling him of his wealth, which was not restored to his daughter but upon condition that she should marry one of her sons.

This unjust proceeding again excited the discontent of the barons, who, in 1228, took up arms against the count of Champagne, then king of Navarre, whom they accused of having poisoned the king Louis VIII., that he might live more freely with Blanche of Castile. Beset on all sides, Thibault had recourse to the queen, who summoned the nobles to hear their complaints; they boldly replied that they had taken up arms to render justice to themselves, not expecting to receive it at the hands of a woman who declared herself the protectress of her husband's murderer. The nature of this accusation rendered Thibault's cause that of the queen, who accompanied her troops to his succour, and met the enemy at the fortress of Bellesme, and this circumstance added to her other titles that of the "great captain."

The place was considered impregnable from the thickness of the walls, and another great obstacle was the severity of the weather, which caused the loss of several men and horses from extreme cold. Blanche did not yield to difficulties; she bestowed great attention on the soldiers, and did all in her power to preserve them from the rigour of the season; she caused large fires to be

kept up, and gave high recompense to all who brought wood to the camp; she slept by the fire of the bivouac, conversed with the troops, and encouraged her officers by her gracious manners.

Two assaults were successively made, and at length the great tower was dismantled, and the Bretons, who were sustained by a corps of English auxiliaries in defending the fortress, were obliged to surrender to the king and queen-mother, to whom is justly attributed the honour of this siege. She took the duke of Brittany, who headed the revolt, prisoner, but afterwards pardoned him; and then, after having taken Nantes and Acenis, she obliged the count of Marche to surrender in 1230.

But after having performed so much by the force of arms and by treaty, Blanche's glory was much tarnished by her ingratitude to the count of Champagne, whose services she appeared to have forgotten when he could be no longer useful to her; indeed she was desirous of preventing the possibility of injury from the man whom she should have least suspected.

Alix de Champagne, queen of Cyprus, daughter of Henry II., count of Champagne, king of Jerusalem, and elder brother of Thibault III., the father of Thibault, count of Champagne, laid claim to the province of Champagne, although ejected by the Salique law; the ungrateful Blanche sustained the pretensions of Alix,

without examining whether they were justly founded. Thibault's right to the province was established; but he was obliged to pay his niece an indemnity of two millions of livres. The count's resources were insufficient to raise this sum, and by the manner in which the queen offered to assist him in his embarrassment, there is certainly little proof of a correspondence of tender sentiments, she having thought more of the interests of her son than of those of the amorous Thibault. He possessed the provinces of Blois, Sancerre, Chartres, and Chateaudun, which she offered to purchase for the amount he owed to Alix. Thibault hesitated, but the queen urged it, till at length, says Mezeray, this poor prince once more surrendered to love, and replied with a sigh, "Madam, my soul, my body, and all my possessions, are yours!" This was exactly what the dark policy of the regent desired; she effectually succeeded in diminishing the count's power, which is an indelible stain on her memory.

Having appeased the disturbances caused by the jealousy of the nobles, and terminated the war against the Albigeois, the regent had an opportunity of displaying her high capacity for governing. She profited by the repose which France then enjoyed, to finish the education of her son, King Louis, whom she surrounded with the most learned men in the kingdom. Posterity has

ranked the education of Louis IX. amongst Blanche's highest titles to glory.

At length Louis's majority terminated the regency in 1235, and Blanche put the finishing stroke to her work by marrying him to Margaret of Provence, and augmenting his territories by the addition of that rich province. She also married his two brothers, Robert and Alphonso, the former to Matilda, daughter to the duke of Brabant, with the title of Count d'Artois, and the other to Jane of Toulouse, with the title of Count de Toulouse: but this young court, under the severe eye of Blanche, did not yield to any superfluous expenses, or the ruinous and luxurious habits common at courts; all being remarkably pious, especially the king.

Although Louis held the reins of government, Blanche could not entirely relinquish the charms of domination, and the king, grateful for her sage advice, suffered her to participate in the royal authority; nevertheless the queen was so jealous of her influence over him, that she was often uneasy at his affection for his young wife, and used every endeavour to prevent their enjoying much of each other's society.

The king and queen-mother, however, governed the state with much wisdom, and the country for some time enjoyed peace and happiness, when Louis fell dangerously ill at Pontoise, upon which he made a vow that if

he recovered he would form a crusade; he was cured, and, unfortunately for France, accomplished his fatal promise. Although a new regency for Blanche was the result of this useless enterprise, she nevertheless exhausted all her powers of persuasion to prevent her son from undertaking the expedition, but without success; the king departed in 1248, leaving the government in the hands of his mother. She accompanied the king, queen, and princes as far as Marseilles, and added the prayers of a mother to the pontifical benediction of Pope Innocent IV.

Blanche next occupied herself in repressing disorders; one of which was the scandalous oppression of the French people under the yoke of the ecclesiastics, who were the lords of the earth. The following occurrence, which is attributed to this queen, does her much honour.

In 1252 the Chapter of Notre Dame de Paris, who possessed the power of life and death over the peasantry subjected to their jurisdiction, had thrown several serfs of Châteney, who were incapable of paying a most burdensome contribution, into the prisons of the officiality. These unhappy people were so closely confined that they could with difficulty move in their narrow prisons, and were even deprived of air. Blanche, touched with compassion for them, sent to request their liberation out of consideration for herself. The canons haughtily replied,

that no person had a right to interfere with their affairs, and that they would kill their vassals if they thought fit; and to brave the queen and punish these unfortunate persons for the protection she had shown them, arrested the wives and children of their prisoners, and stowed them all in cells together; by which several died from want of air, and infection.

The queen's indignation was roused at this insolence and barbarity; and proceeding with her guards to the prison, desired them to break open the doors of the cells, and lest the fear of ecclesiastical influence should cause them to disobey, she gave the example by striking the first blow herself; the doors were soon thrown open, and exposed to view corpses heaped together, and disfigured beings who had hardly strength left to enjoy the pure air, or to throw themselves at the feet of their benefactress. From that fortunate period, the feudal yoke of the clergy was less heavy, and peasants were permitted to purchase their liberty.

During the second regency of this illustrious queen, who was governing the French nation in peace and wisdom, she had the grief of learning the defeat, at Mansorah, and the captivity of the king and his brothers the princes, on the coast of Africa, which occurred in the year 1249. Plunged in the deepest affliction, she exhausted the treasury to procure Louis liberty, and sent

him eleven wagons loaded with silver to assist in effecting it. In the trouble which this disaster caused her, she had the weakness to permit the union of the *Pastoureaux*, which were bands under the direction of an apostate monk, who assembled and armed all the vagabonds in France; and, under the pretext of going to assist in the deliverance of the king, committed the greatest excesses, pillaging and setting fire to villages, till the queen was obliged to send a force to put down these dangerous marauders.

During this grievous position of affairs, Pope Innocent IV. having published the necessity of a new crusade against the emperor Conrad, the queen forbid all persons to enroll in this war, for France required all its resources; her two sons, the counts of Anjou and Poitou, having arrived with a letter from the king, requiring more money and succour; and although Blanche lamented the cause which obliged her to issue the order, she nevertheless published it, announcing that all who did not set out immediately for the Holy Land would have their houses and lands confiscated.

So anxious was Blanche to release her son from the power of the Saracens, that she was even disposed to resign Normandy to Henry III., king of England, to whom she had applied for assistance, and who asked that province as the price of his aid; but the barons suc-

ceeded in dissuading her from rendering this sacrifice to maternal affection.

Blanche's troubles increased daily; the king was pining in captivity, and her second son, Robert, count of Artois, had been slain in Egypt; so that, sinking under the accumulated weight of these evils, she was attacked with a violent fever, which brought her to the tomb at Melun, whither she had been removed for change of air by order of her medical attendants. Some days before her death she assumed the habit of the order of Cîteaux.

She was interred with unusual magnificence; her body was clothed with all the insignia of royalty, and the crown placed upon her head; she was seated on a throne of gold with her face uncovered, and thus transported to her last resting-place by the principal nobles of the court.

Only four out of the eleven children she had borne Louis VIII. survived her. She had two daughters, one of whom, Isabella, was the founder and abbess of Long Champ. Her sons were, Saint Louis, king of France; Robert, count of Artois; Charles, count of Anjou and king of Naples; Alphonso, count of Auvergne; Jean; Stephen; Philip; and two others, who died very young.

Blanche of Castile was deeply regretted; for her death was a most unfortunate event for France, at that time deprived of her king, and in a most critical posi-

tion. So high was the opinion entertained of her by her by her successors, that several of the queen dowagers of France assumed the surname of "*Blanche*," as the Roman emperors did that of "*Augustus*."

QUEEN MARGARET OF PROVENCE.

(Reign of Louis IX.)

LOUIS IX., commonly called Saint Louis on account of his virtue and piety, was married to Margaret, daughter of Raymond Berenger III., count of Provence, and of Beatrice of Savoy, at Sens, in the year 1234. The ambassadors who were sent to conduct Margaret received a promise of twenty thousand francs, as well as the rich province of Provence, for her dower; her journey through all the towns of France was a series of entertainments, festivity reigned throughout the kingdom, and the marriage was celebrated with great splendour.

They were both young, Louis being nineteen and Margaret only fifteen years of age. This princess had no ambition beyond the attainment of her husband's affection; and she was fortunate in her desires, for Louis was fondly attached to her; his love was the boundary of her wishes, and this model of wives retained till her death the same honourable sentiments.

Margaret was amiable and sensible ; she received a most careful education, and had been surrounded by the most intelligent and brilliant characters at the court of her father, whose generosity in the patronage of poets and artists was universally known ; but she never displayed any proof of extraordinary talent, perhaps from a sentiment of modesty, which she no doubt considered one of the first merits.

Louis IX. justly appreciated his wife's amiable disposition ; nevertheless Margaret, who was mild and passive, could not conquer a sentiment of well founded dislike to her mother-in-law, whose severe and imperious character she feared, having been the object of her frequent persecutions. Blanche, confident of the authority she possessed over the mind of her son, and with a view of depriving the queen of all influence over him at the Court, being jealous of the familiarity of the young pair, endeavoured to restrain their intimacy ; and this interference obliged them to employ various stratagems to obtain an occasional meeting. It is asserted that while residing for a short period at Pontoise, Blanche, as usual, obliged them to occupy separate apartments, and Louis took occasion, during his mother's short absences, to visit his young wife, who sometimes also stole furtively into his room ; and on the approach of the queen-mother the

ushers struck the door with a cane, or gave some other signal, upon which they immediately separated.

“Quand le roi chevauchait par son royaume, Blanche le faisait séparer de le Royne son épouse ; ils n'étaient jamais logés ensemblement.”

One day Margaret, being very ill in bed, desired to be gratified with the conversation of her husband ; when the queen-mother entered the room, and taking her son by the hand, led him gently towards the door. Margaret, losing patience, cried out, “Will you not, then, suffer me to see my lord and husband the king, either in life or death ?”

This inquisitorial tyranny augmented the conjugal affection of the young sovereigns ; and it was with inexpressible delight that Margaret found she should be released from it by her approaching departure with the king for the Holy Land, as the law, as well as her own wishes, joined her fate with that of her husband, and she prepared with gayety for the voyage.

To her natural simplicity and candour Margaret also added firmness and devotion, which the reverses Saint Louis encountered in Palésthine developed most forcibly.

She was pregnant when the king was taken prisoner at Saint John d'Acre, in 1250, and was informed of this new catastrophe before her accouchement at Damietta, which place the king had confided to her government,

and where she was besieged by the Saracens. It would be difficult to paint the desolation of the queen on learning the captivity of her husband, and the dread of being exposed to the brutality of the licentious Asiatic soldiery threw her into despair.

The cavaliers and soldiers from Genoa and Pisa, who formed part of the expedition, were enclosed in the town with her, and being without food, the auxiliaries desired to quit the place ; but Margaret summoned their captains, and promised to buy a sufficient quantity of provisions if they would remain in Damietta, which was the king's last resource. The town was more and more surrounded by enemies, and in the difficult position in which she was placed the queen feared the consequences of an assault ; she therefore retained but one soldier near her person, who was a distinguished chevalier, upwards of eighty years of age. In one of her moments of alarm she threw herself at his knees and entreated him to grant the request she was about to make : the old cavalier swore to do so. "Sir chevalier," said the queen, "by the faith you owe me, I conjure you to cut off my head if Damietta is taken by the Saracens." "I intended to do so," replied the veteran. No record in history can afford a more heroic incident. Some hours after Margaret gave birth to a son, whom she called Tristan, on

account of the unhappy circumstances which occurred at the period of his birth.

The king, Louis IX., whose magnanimity astonished even his enemies, refused to be ransomed with money.

To increase the evils, the Genoese and Pisanese, seeing the unfortunate turn of affairs and the captivity of the king, prepared to abandon the town and the army. The queen entreated them to defer the accomplishment of this design, and finding her tears and prayers useless, she offered them the enormous sum of 360,000 livres, a part of which was the produce of the sale of her jewels to the Jews, upon which they agreed to remain. Her devotion was rewarded, for Damietta, which she had so intrepidly preserved, was taken as ransom for Saint Louis, who thus owed his liberty to his affectionate wife.

Although her health was not re-established, Margaret immediately proceeded to Saint John d'Acre in 1252, where she was reunited to the king, after a long and cruel separation.

Shortly after, Louis received tidings of his mother's death, and determined to return to France.

The sire de Joinville, having observed the queen in tears in consequence of the event, frankly said, "*Qu'il était bien vrai qu'on ne devoit mie croire femme à pleurer, quisque le devil qu'elle menait était pour la dame qu'elle haïssait le plus en ce monde.*" But the queen, equally

candid, replied, that it was not for the loss of her mother-in-law that she lamented, but that she was grieved to see the king plunged into such profound affliction, and that, in fact, she wept because her husband wept.

In 1254 the king and queen embarked for France, with the remains of the army. The navigation was difficult. While proceeding under full sail towards the isle of Cyprus, the vessel struck violently on a small desert island, and was very much shattered. The cavaliers all recommended the king and queen to abandon the ship; but as it was the only one capable of conveying them all, and as Louis was unwilling to embark in a smaller vessel and leave a part of his followers behind, he determined to proceed. In this critical position Margaret had recourse to a vow, and obtained her husband's permission to offer a silver lamp to Saint Nicholas. After a long and dangerous voyage the royal family arrived at Marseilles, and from thence proceeded to Paris, where Louis occupied himself with studying the happiness of his people.

Margaret devoted herself to religious duties: she built convents and made pilgrimages, and the king, who often joined her in her pious occupations, resolved to abdicate the throne, and retire to a Franciscan monastery; but Margaret dissuaded him from this project, and France owes a debt of gratitude to the queen for having pre-

served this excellent king to his people, at a time when good princes were so few.

Notwithstanding her elevated and religious ideas, Margaret always retained her simplicity of manners, and it was this simplicity which once caused her to embrace a woman of bad fame, as it was customary at mass, on presenting the offering, to give the kiss of peace to those near her. When she was informed of her mistake, she complained to the king, who assigned a particular costume to that class of persons.

Whether Louis IX. had little confidence in Margaret's talents, or that he did not wish to burden her with the affairs of state, is uncertain, but he did not appoint her regent on undertaking his last fatal crusade, in the year 1270, during which he died of the plague at Tunis the same year.

He assigned Margaret, for her dower, Corbeil, Meulan, Vernon, Pontoise, Etamps, Dourdans, la Ferte Alps, and an annuity of 219 livres, seven sous, and six deniers, payable by the Jews every three months. She might have constituted a fine estate by claiming Provence from her brother-in-law Charles of Anjou, king of Naples, whom she suffered to ravage that beautiful country, for she was so devoted to religion that earthly things had no longer any charm for her.

Margaret died in 1295, aged sixty-six years, in the

convent of the Cordeliers de Saint Claire, which she founded in the faubourg Saint Marcel, and in favour of which she made a will; all her valuable effects she left to different hospitals. Her body was removed to the royal sepulchre of Saint Denis.

Margaret was the mother of six sons and five daughters, but only four of her children survived her. Her second son, Philip le Hardi, succeeded Saint Louis, the eldest having died at the age of sixteen: she had also John Tristan, born during the siege of Damietta; Peter, count of Chartres; and Robert, count of Clermont. One of her daughters, Isabella, was queen of Navarre; another, Agnes, married Robert II., duke of Burgundy; Blanche was wedded to Ferdinand de la Cerda, son of the king of Castile; and Margaret was duchess of Brabant.

The many excellent qualities of Margaret of Provence, added to those of the virtuous Louis, insured to France, during their long union, fifteen years of repose, which it much needed.

QUEEN ISABELLA OF ARRAGON.

(Reign of Philip III.)

ISABELLA, daughter of James I., king of Arragon, and of Yolande of Hungary, had not attained her fifteenth year when she was married to Philip le Hardi at Clermont, in 1262. She brought as dower the counties of Beziers and Carcassonne to the crown.

Louis IX. having taken his sons with him to the last crusade, Isabella accompanied her husband, and courageously supported the fatigues of the expedition, although of an exceedingly delicate constitution. Her father-in-law, when dying, recommended Philip to return to France and take possession of his government, which he determined upon doing immediately. The fleet sailed by the way of Sicily, and was overtaken by a storm on the coast of Trapani, where eighteen large vessels and several smaller ones, containing altogether about two thousand persons, and a great portion of the equipage of the army, were wrecked within sight of the port. Fortunately the king of France, his brother and his brother-in-law, the kings of Sicily and Navarre, their queens, and several noblemen, had time to disembark.

Philip was detained in Sicily by weakness, from the effects of the plague he had caught at Tunis, as well as

by the illness of his brother-in-law Thibault, king of Navarre, who died fifteen days after landing, and whose wife followed him to the tomb a few days after; as also did his uncle the count of Toulouse, and Jane his wife. Queen Isabella did not long survive them: in fording a small river near Cozenza, in Calabria, she fell from her horse, which, she being pregnant, occasioned her a premature delivery, that caused her death in 1271.

Thus the new king entered France with the sad remains of his father, Saint Louis; the queen Isabella, his wife; Tristan, his brother; the king of Navarre, his brother-in-law; Alphonso, his uncle; and Jane, countess of Toulouse, his aunt. His reign commenced in the midst of funeral gloom, for there were few persons who had not lost some part of their families in this fatal expedition.

Isabella was the mother of four princes, of whom one, Philip-le-Bel, succeeded to the throne; two others, who died young; and Charles de Valois, who was the royal branch from which thirteen French monarchs sprung.

The king and court deeply regretted this amiable princess, who was universally beloved. She was buried at Saint Denis.

QUEEN MARY OF BRABANT.

PHILIP III.'s second wife was Mary, daughter of Henry III., duke of Brabant, and Alice of Burgundy. The duke himself accompanied his daughter to France, and the marriage was celebrated at the Château de Vincennes in the year 1274. Twelve months after the queen was crowned in the Sainte Chapelle of Paris, by the archbishop of Rheims.

Mary is represented as being equally beautiful and intelligent. The duke of Brabant was one of the best poets which that epoch afforded, and the queen, inheriting her father's taste, cultivated poetry with much assiduity. A lady of distinction at her court, called Blanche, who was her intimate friend, partook of her inclination, and both encouraged the poets of the day by their counsel and patronage. Adenez le Roix, a contemporary author, acknowledges, in the commencement of his romance entitled "*Cléomades*," that he is indebted to Mary and her friend for all that is good in that work.

Philip was much attached to Mary, and her combined advantages of personal beauty and intellectual talent rendered her so attractive, that he invariably gave her admission in the councils of state. But history does

not give Mary credit for having such excellent qualities as her personal appearance betokened.

The king had a favourite named Peter la Brosse, who by the favour of his sovereign had, from valet-de-chambre and barber to St. Louis, been elevated to the eminent position of prime minister. This man, who had been accustomed during Philip's three years of widowhood to enjoy his entire confidence, was jealous of the power of the young queen, who frequently obtained favours without condescending to ask them through him. Mary, who was conscious of the artful and intriguing character of this fellow, whom she despised, used every effort to dislodge him from his honourable post, and each took occasion to undermine the other. La Brosse endeavoured to persuade the king that Mary had expressed herself indignant at the idea of Isabella's sons taking the precedence of those which she might have; and at this time the prince Louis, eldest son of Isabella of Arragon, was attacked with a malignant fever, of which he died, and some livid spots on his skin indicated that his death had been occasioned by poison. The queen accused La Brosse, and remarked that all who attended on the young prince during his illness were persons chosen by him, and she demanded that they should be interrogated, and imprisoned until the frightful mystery attending Louis's death should be solved. La Brosse, on the contrary,

did not hesitate to insinuate to the king that the prince had been Mary's victim, and that his three brothers would meet with the same fate, to make way for her children.

It would be difficult to paint the agony and distraction of the monarch: a horrible crime had been committed in the bosom of his family, his first-born was the victim, the accused was his cherished wife, the accuser a minister, his friend and confidant: his embarrassment was extreme; he employed menaces, promises, and even had recourse to religious persons, who, he believed, could learn the truth by a miracle from heaven.

After having exhausted all research and conjecture, Philip resolved to apply to a celebrated sorceress who resided at Nivelles in Brabant; and in this act must be recognised the queen's influence, the king having preferred a person who was living under the dominion of her father, before the numerous individuals who enjoyed the repute of prophetesses in France. He accordingly sent the abbot of St. Denis and the bishop of Bayeux to Nivelles to consult this oracle. The prophetess eluded the question by an evasive answer, and the bishop of Bayeux, who was related to La Brosse, informed the king that he could not reveal the declaration of the sorceress of Nivelles, because she had spoken under the secrecy of confession. The king was not satisfied with

this answer to his application, and immediately sent the bishop of Dôle, and a Knight-Templar, Arnould de Vismale, to Nivelles, with a repetition of his question. Their reply was favourable to the queen, the sorceress having declared that the poison was administered by a man who was always about the king's person. Philip, who placed great faith in those absurdities and impositions, was delighted to find his wife innocent; he, however, suspended his resentment against La Brosse, not considering the evidence sufficiently conclusive.

But the jealousy and enmity of the queen and nobles were not long dormant. Shortly after this event a man, whose name and quality were unknown, arrived at a monastery in Melun, where he fell dangerously ill; none knew from whence he came, but, in dying, he confided a letter to one of the monks, with strict injunctions to place it in the hands of the king himself. The monk performed his commission, and Philip convoked his council at Vincennes and communicated the contents of the letter, which bore the seal of La Brosse, and submitted it to their decision. La Brosse was arrested and imprisoned; his enemies were his judges, he was convicted of treason, of holding private communication with the enemies of France, and of peculation. Of what crime is a disgraced favourite not capable? He was accordingly hanged at Paris.

The people, to whom the accusation and execution became known at the same moment, murmured violently, and the king, who already regretted the hasty manner in which his favourite had been disposed of, displayed great displeasure towards the queen, whose name was still not entirely freed from the stain of murder; he even placed guards at the door of her apartment, and forbade her communication with any one but her own immediate attendants. Fortunately for her, her brother, the Duke John of Brabant, hastened to France to maintain his sister's innocence by close combat, and to prove by force of arms that she had no hand in poisoning the young Prince Louis; and according to the existing law, if her champion had fallen, she would have been burned to death. The combat took place; the opponent who was chosen to meet the duke was overcome, and the vanquishing arm of the duke of Brabant proclaimed the innocence of the queen.

The death of La Brosse was the salvation of Mary of Brabant; but few historians spare her the disgrace of having been the author of that apocryphal letter which brought the unfortunate man to an ignominious death, and by which she revenged herself on him, whose only fault, perhaps, was balancing his own influence with that of his ambitious queen. She did not enjoy her power long, for the death of the king, in the year 1285, obliged

her to renounce that authority to which she affixed so much value. She retired to Picardy, but little more is known of her than that she founded some monasteries, which, according to the idea then in existence, was a certain preservative against the infernal fires, and an expiation for the greatest crimes.

Mary fixed her last retreat at Mural, near Melun, where she died in the year 1321, at an advanced age, after having devoted her latter years to the education of her granddaughter, Jane of France, queen of Navarre.

Her body was interred in the convent of the Cordeliers of Paris, and her heart deposited in that of the Jacobins. She had three children by Philip: Louis, count d'Evreux; and two daughters, both of whom were queens, one having married Edward I., king of England, and the other Rodolph, duke of Austria and king of Hungary.

QUEEN JANE OF NAVARRE.

(Reign of Philip IV.)

At the age of fifteen, Philip IV., surnamed Le Bel, was married in 1284 to Jane of Navarre, when she was only thirteen years old, by which union the young prince acquired the title of king of Navarre. This queen owed her accession to that kingdom to a singular event. She

was the daughter of Henry I., king of Navarre and count of Champagne, and her young brother, Thibault, was the heir; but the governor of the prince, who was amusing him by throwing him backwards and forwards to the nurse, let the child fall over a high balcony, and he was killed on the spot, in 1273. The governor in despair stabbed himself, and fell dead upon the body of his young master.

Jane was two years and a half old when this circumstance occurred, and her father had her immediately proclaimed hereditary queen of Navarre, in opposition to the ministers of the state, who were desirous of establishing the Salique law. Her father, Henry I., when dying, recommended his wife Blanche d'Artois to marry Jane to the crown of France, but the nobles of Navarre were desirous that she should espouse the king of Arragon; the queen-mother, therefore, to avoid a dispute, resolved to remove with her daughter to the court of France, where they were generously received by Philip III. The evasion of these princesses created a civil war in Navarre, but peace was soon restored to that kingdom by the policy of Philip and the valour of the French soldiers.

That monarch bestowed great attention on Jane's education, which was suitable to her rank; and as an acknowledgment, and out of gratitude for his generous

care, as well as respect for the memory of her father, she married the son of her royal host.

According to the wish of the king, Jane retained the government of Navarre, and, some years after her marriage, succeeded in expelling the Arragonese and Castilians from that kingdom, in which she established sub-governors, who acted under her direction : she also did the same in Champagne. On the death of Philip-le-Hardi, which occurred in 1285, Philip IV. and Jane were crowned and consecrated at Rheims by Peter Barbet, archbishop of that town. The king was prodigal in his testimonials of esteem for his wife, in whom he had great confidence ; he not only increased her territories of Brie and Champagne in 1288, but, a few years later, when attacked by a dangerous malady, made a will in which he declared Jane the guardian of his children and regent of the kingdom so long as she remained a widow ; she did not, however, survive him.

Jane profited much by the careful education she had received, having been an enthusiastic patroness of the fine arts, which she cultivated with success. Endowed with superior genius and rare talents, she actively directed her thoughts towards wise enterprises. It was this queen who founded the celebrated college of Navarre at Paris, and munificently remunerated the professors whom she established in it ; she also built the town of

Puente-la-Reyna, in Navarre, an almshouse at Château Thierry, and several other places of public utility.

In the year 1299 she accompanied the king in his expedition against Flanders, and, after the defeat of those revolted vassals, they went with a large retinue to visit Bruges. In the entertainments that were given the king and queen by the inhabitants, Jane saw, with astonishment and mortification, that the ladies were magnificently attired in valuable stuffs and covered with diamonds. "I thought," said she, "that I should have appeared here as the only queen; but I find six hundred women who by the richness of their apparel can dispute that title with me." This ostentatious display of the Flemings, which was done with a view of rendering honour to the royal pair, excited the queen's envy, and she was so unworthy as to persuade the king to despoil them of a part of their goods, which culpable advice he condescended to follow.

The expenses of the town of Bruges for the reception of the king had been considerable, and the appearance of so much wealth was an alluring bait for the financiers of the king, who were charged to levy most burdensome taxes; the Flemings, accustomed to be treated with moderation by their princes, murmured, and the governor imprisoned several of the most respectable townsmen, which so irritated the populace, that men, women, and

children united to attack the French governor and his people, and upwards of five hundred Frenchmen fell on that unfortunate day; an event which, perhaps, would never have occurred had not the cupidity of the queen incited Philip to perform acts of injustice. But great eulogy is due to Jane of Navarre, for the wisdom with which she governed, and the energy she displayed, when the count of Bar made an irruption into Champagne, in the year 1297; this spirited woman placed herself at the head of her troops and marched them to the attack, when she took the count prisoner and conveyed him in triumph to Paris.

Jane of Navarre was the mother of three kings of France,—Louis X., Philip V., and Charles IV.; she had also Isabella, who married the weak and unfortunate Edward II., king of England; and three other children who died young,—Robert, Margaret, and Blanche. This queen died, aged thirty-three, at the Château of Vincennes, in the year 1305: she was interred in the choir of the church of the Cordeliers de Paris; but the church and tomb were destroyed by fire in 1580.

QUEEN MARGARET OF BURGUNDY.

(Reign of Louis X.)

IN the year 1305 Louis-le-Mutin, or the Mutinous, then only fifteen years of age, was married to Margaret of Burgundy, who was still younger than himself. She was the daughter of Robert II., duke of Burgundy, and titular king of Thessalonica, and of Agnes, daughter of St. Louis. Margaret was handsome, spirited, and full of levity; moreover she was the mistress of her own actions in a court in which gallantry was extended almost to libertinism, and powerfully contrasted with the regular and virtuous habits which were observed during the reign of her grandmother Margaret of Provence.

Friar Maillard, in one of his sermons, censured the dissolute manners of that court in the following coarse and pointed terms: "N'est-il pas vrai, mesdemoiselles, qu'il se trouve parmi vous plus de femmes débauchées que de femmes honnêtes? . . . D'ailleurs vos pères, les bourgeois de Paris, ont coutume de faire gagner la dot à leurs filles à la sueur de leur corps. Alty à tous les diables."

The same gross and free style was adopted by the troubadours and poets throughout France; and a contemporary writer, in an epistle addressed to his country-

women, offers them advice by which some idea may be formed of the manners of that period. He recommends them not to run in going to church, or to suffer their bosoms and arms to be too much exposed; neither to swear nor drink, and to give up the habit of lying; to return the salute of the poor; to go to the altar without laughing, and to be careful not to soil their fingers too much in eating (forks not having been brought into use until the reign of Henry III.).

Queen Margaret, who was introduced to this corrupted court at a tender age, acquired its voluptuous tastes and manners, and at length, with her sisters-in-law, Jane of Burgundy, wife of Philip, count of Poitiers, and Blanche, wife of Charles, count of Marche, set an example of irregularity and disorder, which is almost unprecedented in the annals of history.

These princesses bribed their ushers to admit into their apartments two Norman gentlemen, named Philip and Gautier d'Annoy, who were equerries to the king, and possessed no particular personal advantages, which Louis and Charles did in a remarkable degree; but Margaret and Blanche nevertheless had an intrigue with them, and in order to keep it a secret from the court requested permission to pass the summer season at the abbey of Maubuisson, near Pontoise; where, less subject to observation, and surrounded by confidential persons,

they could plunge unreservedly into their disgraceful excesses. Each night the equeuries scaled the walls of the abbey, and clandestinely entered the apartments of the queen and countess.

At length one of Margaret's maids of honour, *Mademoiselle de Morfortaine*, who had been some time affianced to Philip d'Annoy, perceived his coldness, and was tempted to watch his movements; when she observed him enter the chamber of the queen. She mentioned the circumstance to her confessor at Maubuisson, who advised this young girl to discover the whole. Upon *Mademoiselle de Morfontaine's* evidence the brothers were surprised and arrested in the princesses' apartments, and immediately condemned for high treason. They were first mutilated, then flayed alive, after which they were beheaded, and their bodies hung upon gibbets at Pontoise, in 1315. One of the ushers, in his confession before being strangled, declared that Margaret and Blanche had used every possible means to conquer the respect and timidity of these unfortunate young men.

The queen and the countess of Marche, who were found guilty of adultery, had their heads shaved, and were imprisoned in the *château Galliard d'Andelys*.* But Louis could not forgive the indignity and dishonour

*Founded by Richard Cœur-de-Lion, on a spot where it is said to have rained blood.—CHATEAUBRIAND.

which his queen had heaped upon him, and shortly after her imprisonment he ordered her to be strangled with her own shroud. She was put to death at the age of twenty-six, in the year 1315, and buried in the church of the Cordeliers de Vernon. Margaret left one daughter, Jane, countess d'Evreux and Queen of Navarre.

Blanche, countess of Marche, and the criminal companion of her sister-in-law, Queen Margaret, was the daughter of Otho IV., count palatine of Burgundy, and though spared from suffering an ignominious death, nevertheless endured a long captivity, from which she never was released but to take the veil. This princess is reputed to have been the most beautiful woman in France when she married Charles le Bel, count of Marche in the year 1307. In 1315 she was confined at the château Galliard d'Andelys; and nine years after, on the accession of her husband, Charles IV., to the throne of France, he solicited Pope John XXII. to dissolve his marriage; to which step he was urged by the barons, who were desirous that he should form another alliance for the purpose of securing male heirs to the throne. The pontiff readily acceded to this reasonable request; but although her marriage was cancelled, Blanche was not permitted the enjoyment of liberty, and a translation to the château Gauray was all the change which was granted to this prisoner, who, being weary of her mono-

tonous and sad position, and finding that neither tears nor protestations would rekindle any sentiment of either passion or pity in the heart of her husband, entreated to be allowed to exchange the captivity of the prison for that of the cloister; and after twelve years of rigorous confinement, took the veil in the abbey of Maubuisson, where she did penance for her former faults in the spot that had been the theatre of her pleasures and her crimes, and near the place in which the companion of her guilt had expiated his audacious love by an awful death.

During her conventual seclusion, which lasted but one year, she had the mortification of witnessing the accession of two strangers to the throne which her irregularities had deprived her of; so that her last days were poisoned by chagrin. She died in 1326, leaving no posterity, her two children having preceded her to the tomb.

QUEEN CLEMENCE OF HUNGARY.

AFTER the death of his first wife, Margaret of Burgundy, Louis X. was solicited by the nobles of his court to seek a more worthy alliance; he accordingly asked the hand of Clemence, daughter of Charles Robert, king

of Hungary, and a descendant of the house of Hapsburg, which was accorded; and Clemence was conducted to France, and crowned at Rheims by the archbishop, Robert de Courtenay, in the year 1315. Louis died at Vincennes a few months after his marriage, leaving Clemence pregnant; and the barons conferred the regency on the king's brother, Philip, until her child should be born to decide the succession. But five months after Louis's death, the queen's grief for the loss of her husband caused the premature birth of John, whose reign and life lasted but five days; accordingly, by virtue of the Salique law, the crown was adjudged to Philip.

Louis-le-Hutin left his wife extensive domains in Gatinais, and all the confiscated property of Enguerrand de Marigny, who had been executed for extortion while holding the office of superintendent of finances.

Clemence, who during her short reign was greatly beloved by the French, retired to the Hôtel du Temple, where she died young in the year 1328, surrounded by numerous attached followers. She was interred in the church of the Jacobins.

QUEEN JANE OF BURGUNDY.

(Reign of Philip V.)

THIS princess was the eldest daughter of Otho V., count palatine of Burgundy, and of Mahault, countess of Artois, and sister to Blanche, countess of Marche.

She was married to Philip, count of Poitiers, at Corbeil, in 1306; but was affianced to him in 1294, at Vincennes, when only two years of age.

Her husband, who was of a serious character, lived in retirement, and occupied himself with the study of poetry and the belles-lettres; but Jane, who lived on terms of intimacy with Queen Margaret of France and her sister Blanche, imbibed their licentious habits, and, at the age of fourteen, was accused with them of adultery.

Philip, who was less severe than his brothers Louis X., and Charles, confined his wife in the château of Dourdain for twelve months; at the expiration of which time he was either moved by a sentiment of self-love, or by his naturally kind disposition, to pardon and recall her.

The death of his nephew, John, surnamed the Posthumous, having entitled Philip to the throne, he conducted his wife to Rheims, where she was crowned and consecrated with him by the archbishop, Robert de Courtenay, in 1317. Jane lived on good terms with the king until

his death, which occurred in 1322; but her widowhood is stained by crimes of the most revolting nature, and the scenes which took place at the abbey of Maubuisson were enacted at her residence, the Hôtel de Nesle, with double depravity. The towers of the Hôtel de Nesle were bathed by the waters of the Seine, and all those who had the misfortune to attract Jane's criminal regards were invited to the château, and afterwards precipitated from the heights into the water, to prevent a recital of her infamy. A young student, named John Buridan, who was afterwards rector of the university, recounts in his memoirs the circumstance of his having, in passing the hotel, engaged the notice of the queen, who caused him to be conducted to her; and relates also how he was so fortunate as to escape the cruel treatment which had befallen so many others.

Jane died in 1329, at Roye, in Picardy, after having founded the college of Burgundy, in Paris. She was buried at the convent of the Cordeliers of Paris, beside the heart of her husband. This queen gave birth to five children: Louis, who died young; Jane, who espoused Eudes IV., duke of Burgundy; Margaret, married to the count of Flanders; Isabella, dauphine of Viennois; and Blanche, abbess of Longchamp.

QUEEN MARY OF LUXEMBURG.

(Reign of Charles-le-Bel.)

AFTER the pope, John XXII., had pronounced the divorce of Blanche of Burgundy, Charles IV., who was elevated to the throne by the death of his two brothers, obtained the hand of Mary of Luxemburg, daughter of Henry VII., emperor of Germany, and of Margaret of Brabant. This princess, who had been educated by the inmates of the Dominican convent, exchanged the sombre dress of that order for the royal mantle; and was crowned with great splendour at Paris, in the year 1323, in presenee of her brother, the king of Bohemia, and her uncle, the archbishop of Treves.

But she enjoyed the dignity but a short period, having lost her diadem and her life by the overturning of her vehicle in going to the royal palace of Montargis, on which occasion she was dangerously injured, and died in her accouchement at Issoudun in the year 1324, being accompanied to the tomb by her infant; they were buried in the church of Saint Dominick de Montargis.

Mary was only eighteen years of age when her death occurred.

QUEEN JANE D'EVREUX.

CHARLES, who was still young when Mary of Luxemburg died, determined to re-marry, with the view of perpetuating his dynasty; he therefore selected his cousin-german, Jane d'Evreux, whom he espoused in 1325.

This union was advantageous in many respects, and the king's prospects, in regard of the kingdom of Navarre, powerfully contributed to decide him in his choice. Jane's dower was twenty thousand francs in specie, and an annuity of seven hundred livres.

Three years after their marriage, Charles died, leaving the queen *enceinte*, and the succession to the crown of France was deferred, as in the time of Clemence of Hungary, until the birth of a girl, which took place in 1328, and left the throne vacant for Philip de Valois. After the regency of Blanche de Castile, few queens held that power until the period when it was bestowed upon Isabella of Bavaria. During that interval, the queens of France usually occupied themselves with the acquirements and recreations suitable to their sex.

The queen retired to her own domains in Brie-comte-Robert, where, during the many reigns which she lived to witness, she was deservedly respected and esteemed by all those princes.

Jane d'Evreux was particularly attached to the Carthusian friars of the Château de Vauvert, and greatly enlarged their monastery; she daily visited its inmates, and assisted to prepare their food, which she served herself to the sick who were confined in their cells, and whom she nursed. This pious queen died in 1366, aged sixty, at Brie-comte-Robert, leaving one girl, Blanche, who was married to Philip Duke of Orleans; she had also two others—Jane and Mary, who died young.

Jane requested by will that there should be no funeral honours bestowed on her; nevertheless, after her death she was transported to Notre Dame de Paris on a bed of state, with her face uncovered. The sheriffs of the town carried a cloth of gold, sustained on the point of lances, over her head; the whole parliament, in their robes of ceremony, followed on foot; and the reigning king, Charles V., accompanied the funeral procession as far as Saint Denis, where Jane d'Evreux was placed in the royal tomb by the side of her husband, Charles IV.

BRANCH OF VALOIS.

QUEEN JANE OF BURGUNDY.

(Reign of Philip VI.)

JANE was the daughter of Robert II., duke of Burgundy, and of Agnes, daughter of Saint Louis, and sister to Margaret, who was strangled for adultery by order of her husband, Louis X. The hand of this princess was first promised to the prince of Tarentum, son of Charles II., King of Sicily, but, that union having been set aside, her marriage with Philip, count of Valois, was negotiated in 1302, ratified in 1306, broken off in 1312, and at length realized at Sens in 1313.

The coronation of Philip and Jane was solemnized with a magnificence hitherto unknown. They entered Rheims with a numerous escort of princes, princesses, ambassadors, and ladies in costly attire. The palace of the archbishop, William de Trie, was not large enough to contain this brilliant assemblage, and new halls were obliged to be added to make sufficient space for their entertainment. The queen, to celebrate this epoch, presented the church with an ornament of silver cloth.

Philip displayed the esteem he entertained for his wife, in having named her regent when he meditated a long foreign war, but, as he never executed his projects,

the regency was but a title of honour for her. Jane usually resided at the Hôtel de Nesle, which was situated on the banks of the Seine, on the spot where the institution now stands, and where she died of the plague in 1348, aged fifty-five years. She was sincerely loved and deeply regretted by her husband, who had a high opinion of her wisdom and talents, and who associated her in his administration, and joined her signature to his own in all his most important acts: in the archives of his day are frequently to be found the words—"de l'avis et volonté de la reine, notre chère épouse."

Amongst other acts of her authority, Jane gave liberty to several prelates, who were imprisoned for an abuse of privilege, and prevented the sentence of condemnation for rebellion being pronounced against Robert d'Artois. She had five sons,—John, king of France, Philip, duke of Orleans, and three others who died young; besides a daughter, Mary, Duchess of Limbourg.

This queen was interred in the royal cemetery of Saint Denis.

QUEEN BLANCHE OF NAVARRE.

JOHN, eldest son of Philip de Valois, succeeded to the throne, and was married to Bonne of Luxemburg, who, though mother of a king and daughter of a king, was

never queen herself, having died before the accession of her husband. This princess was the daughter of John of Luxemburg, king of Bohemia. The greatest pomp and splendour presided at this marriage, which took place in 1332, and was attended by the kings of Bohemia and Navarre, as well as by the sovereign dukes of Brittany, Burgundy, Lorraine, and Brabant.

The amiable disposition of the princess Bonne corresponded with her name, which made her universally beloved, and, after enjoying seventeen years of happiness with her husband, she died in the abbey of Maubuisson, in the year 1349, deeply regretted by all who were acquainted with her virtues; she was interred in the choir of that abbey. Bonne de Luxemburg left eight children, who were, Charles V., king of France; Louis, from whom some of the kings of Sicily sprung; John, duke of Berri, father of Pope Felix V.; Philip-le-Hardi, duke of Burgundy; Jane, who married Charles-le-Mauvais, king of Navarre; Mary, duchess of Bar; Margaret, who was dedicated to the church at Poissy; and Isabella, who espoused Galeas Visconti, duke of Milan.

After her death, Philip was desirous of marrying his widowed son John to Blanche, daughter of Philip III., king of Navarre, and of Jane of France, whose hand was disputed by several princes, and promised to Alphonso XI., king of Castile; but as soon as the king

of France made known his wishes to the king of Navarre, that engagement was dissolved, and the princess was sent to France. During Blanche's journey, the queen of France died, and on her arrival she found the court in mourning; it did not, however, last long, for the king became so much enamoured of this young princess, whom he had intended for his son John, duke of Normandy, that he offered her his own hand, and Blanche's ambition induced her to accept the crown, by uniting herself at the age of eighteen to a man who was forty years her senior.

The marriage was celebrated at Bric-comte-Robert, in the year 1349; but Blanche did not long enjoy the dignity of reigning queen, Philip having died eighteen months after their marriage, at Nogent-le-Rotrou, in 1350, leaving his young and beautiful widow on the eve of her accouchement.

Blanche retired to the Château of Neaufles, where she gave birth to a daughter called Jane. She seldom appeared at court, and passed most of her days in retirement, where she was allowed abundant means of gratifying her taste for religious foundations and the bestowal of alms by the king, John, who had great esteem for her.

Some historians relate that she married her chamberlain, the sire of Rabaudanges, but that the king would

not permit the union to be made public, and also insisted that that officer should continue to hold the same appointment in the queen's household. Whether this circumstance deserves credit is doubtful, but it is certain that, when the king of Castile, to whom she was affianced before her marriage with Philip VI., repeated his offer, she sent back the ambassadors with the following reply: —“*Les reines de France ne se remarient pas.*”

Jane died at the Château de Neaufles, in the year 1398, aged seventy, and was buried at Saint Denis. This queen had but one daughter, Jane, who died at the age of eighteen at Beziers, when on her journey to Spain to marry the Duke de Girone, son of Henry IV., king of Arragon.

QUEEN JANE OF AUVERGNE.

(Reign of John.)

JANE, daughter of William XII., count of Boulogne, and of Margaret d'Evreux, was married in 1338 to Philip de Rouvres, duke of Burgundy, by whom she had one son; eight years after she was left a widow, the duke having been killed by a fall from his horse at the siege of Aquillon; and when dying he recommended his wife and children to the care of the king of France.

Edward III., king of England, was desirous of forming an alliance with Jane d'Auvergne, on account of the proximity of the province of Boulogne to Calais, but John was so much captivated by the gentle manners and agreeable conversation of the Duchess of Burgundy, that he baffled Edward's projects, and the beautiful relict of the duke of Burgundy espoused the widowed king of France.

The marriage was celebrated in 1349 by the bishop of Paris, in the church of Nanterre, and the coronation took place at Rheims some months after. The entry of the royal pair into Paris was most brilliant, and the commencement of their reign a series of magnificent entertainments; but after some few years of pleasure had rolled rapidly away, France experienced disasters which clouded it with grief.

In 1356 the king was taken prisoner at the battle of Poitiers, and conveyed to England, where he found consolation and sympathy in the heart of the countess of Salisbury, who was deeply affected by his misfortunes.

At length peace was concluded with England, and John left several hostages as guarantees of his fidelity until the accomplishment of his engagement with Edward; but his son, the duke of Anjou, who was one of the hostages, having violated his promise, and escaped to France, John immediately returned to England in

1364, and gave himself up as a prisoner, replying to those who endeavoured to dissuade him, that—“*Si la bonne foi était bannie de la terre, elle devait trouver un asile dans le cœur des rois.*”

It has been said that John's real cause for returning to England was a desire to revisit the countess of Salisbury, to whom he was much attached; but as nothing can be affirmed on this subject, it is more in accordance with the excellent character usually attributed to that king to judge his motive on that occasion by his action, as well as by his noble reply, which does honour to his memory.

When in England, the king was seized with a severe malady, and the queen, who was deprived of all authority by the regency of the dauphin, resided at the court of her son, the duke of Burgundy, where the grief she felt for her husband's misfortunes considerably abridged her days.

Jane died in 1365, exactly one year after her husband, and was buried at Saint Denis. She had no children by king John.

QUEEN JANE OF BOURBON.

(Reign of Charles V.)

JANE was the daughter of Peter I., duke of Bourbon, and of Isabella of Valois, and was born at Vincennes in 1337, and married to the dauphin Charles in 1350. At the age of six years, Jane's father formed a project for contracting an alliance for her with the count of Savoy, but the death of that prince's father prevented the engagement. In 1348 she was affianced to Humbert, Dauphin of Viennois, but that prince, having resolved to retire from the world and devote himself to religion, gave his estates to Charles, Dauphin of France, Duke of Normandy, who also inherited his betrothed wife. Fourteen years after their marriage, Philip V. and Jane of Bourbon were crowned at Rheims by the archbishop, John de Craon, in 1364; and the queen, on her return from Rheims, made her entry to Paris, mounted on a horse richly caparisoned, and led by the king's brother on foot.

The king was devotedly attached to Jane, whose beauty made a great impression on the volatile Parisians. He spent large sums in procuring her costly dresses and valuable ornaments, and entitled her "*le soleil du royaume.*" He placed her beside him in the parliament,

and required her to give advice upon all occasions of difficulty.

Jane is represented as being worthy of these honours, by the careful education she bestowed on her children, and the virtuous example she set them. Christian de Pison says, "*La royne, durant le repas, par ancienne et raisonnable coustume, pour obvier à vagues paroles et pensées, avait un prud'homme au bout de la table, qui sans cesse disait gestes et mœurs d'aucuns bons trépassés.*"

This queen conducted the affairs of government with so much prudence during the king's long and frequent maladies, that he pronounced her regent, in conjunction with the dukes of Burgundy and Bourbon, when his death should occur. In sickness and misfortune Jane was his consolation, as she had been the charm of his happier days; and her death, which took place before his own, caused him a deep and settled regret from which he never recovered. Having imprudently bathed, in opposition to the wishes of her medical adviser, she expired at the royal residence of Saint Paul, in 1377, on giving birth to Catherine de France, countess de Montpensier.

Her funeral obsequies were attended with great pomp, having been borne to the church of Notre Dame by the first nobles in the kingdom; her body was clothed in

royal robes, the face covered with a white veil of silver tissue, and bearing in her hand a rose and sceptre of fine gold. From Notre Dame she was conveyed to Saint Denis, where her remains still repose.

Jane was the mother of nine children, three of whom only survived her. The eldest was Charles, who succeeded his father as king of France; the next, Louis, duke of Orleans; and the last and only daughter who was spared an early death was Catherine, whose existence cost her her life.

Queen Jane encouraged literature, which she cultivated herself with great success; her virtues rendered her loss a subject of sincere regret to the French, who were much attached to her.

QUEEN AND REGENT ISABELLA OF BAVARIA.

(Reign of Charles VI.)

THE kingdom of France, during the minority of Charles VI., was a prey to the depredations and rivalries of his uncles, the dukes of Berri, Burgundy, and Anjou, who held the power without possessing the talents or

the justice for governing. Charles V., with the politic view of fortifying France against the invasions of England, left his dying recommendation to his son to seek a wife among the princesses of Germany; but this wise project was attended with most unfortunate results: Isabella of Bavaria, daughter of Stephen II., Count Palatin du Rhin, and of Tadia Visconti, was chosen. She possessed remarkable beauty, but was too young at that time for her marriage to be realized; it has been said that Heaven was desirous of giving France an opportunity to avoid that scourge. Nevertheless, the report of the projected marriage reached the court of Bavaria, which, sensible of the honours and advantages attending an alliance with the crown of France, forwarded the views of Charles VI. by a manœuvre, fearing lest that monarch should be united to the daughter of the duke of Lancaster, or the heiress of Lorraine.

The duchess of Brabant, an intriguing woman, treated with the young king's uncles respecting the marriage, and, as soon as she discovered there was a prospect of success, accompanied Isabella to France, who took the journey under the pretext of a pilgrimage. Charles VI. was at Amiens, whither the duchess conducted her charge, and introduced her to the king in all the brilliancy of her beauty, and in elegant attire; on her first interview she knelt before the monarch, who immediately took her

hand and raised her. This artifice, palpable as it was, succeeded, and Charles VI., then only seventeen years of age, fell into the snare; one sight of Isabella determined his choice; he immediately sent his favourite, Bureau de la Rivière, to ask the duke of Bavaria for the hand of the princess, which was accorded, and the marriage celebrated at Amiens in 1385.

Her immoderate taste for luxury, and love of coquetry, began early to manifest itself, and she instituted a Court of Love, upon the model of that established by Eleonor of Guyenne. Besides the princes of the blood royal, and the most ancient nobility of France, there were also doctors of theology, bishops, chaplains, curates, and canons engaged in the affairs of this court.

The king, who was ardently attached to Isabella, encouraged her prodigality by his silence; she withdrew him from the cares of government, and made him the slave of her caprice.

Isabella was crowned at Paris in 1389, after the birth of two princes, upon which occasion magnificent entertainments were given. A triumphal arch was erected at the entrance of the town; all the streets through which she passed were hung with embroidery and flowers; at each crossing the Passion and Crucifixion were enacted, and the fountains threw forth milk and wine. As she passed over the Pont-au-Change, a rope-

dancer in the guise of an angel, descended from between the towers of Notre Dame, placed a crown of diamonds upon her head, and re-ascended. She was seated in a car covered with linen cloth, which was then a new invention and of great value; hitherto the queens and princesses had travelled on horseback, or in litters, and Catherine de Medicis was the first queen in France who had a coach or chariot with leather curtains.

To these fêtes succeeded others at Saint Denis, and the magnificence and expense attending them were inconceivable; they lasted three days and were concluded with a Bacchanalian orgie. The queen of Sicily, then in Paris, was invited, and, under favour of their masks, the two queens and all the assembly committed the greatest disorders.

The king's weakness rendered him blind to the queen's irregularities, and his infamous wife commenced that course of vicious life which led her to deceive and betray her husband, her king, her son, and her country. No doubt her attachment to the Duke of Orleans was the first cause of the mental alienation of Charles VI., which signalized the commencement of that disastrous epoch, when, but for the miraculous aid of Providence, through the means of the celebrated Joan of Arc, France would have been subjugated, and the vanquished people have fallen under the English yoke.

The king's brother, Louis, duke of Orleans, was a person of vicious and dissolute habits, and this was the man for whom the queen forsook her husband, and neglected those talents which she might have rendered conducive to the happiness and welfare of the country. But she was ambitious and violent, and by her intrigues and extravagances forced the overtaxed people to revolt ; she fomented divisions, which were extended by the power of the English in France, and was execrated by the people, who loved and pitied their sovereign, knowing that his misfortunes as well as their own were caused by the queen.

Charles, whose disposition was generous, and whose first wish was the happiness of his people, was too weak to withstand the perfidy of Isabella, who, instead of exerting her influence to settle the disputes which existed between the king and his uncles, fed the flame of discord.

The king's insanity augmented the disasters of the country ; he was hunting in the forest of Mons in the year 1392, when the figure of a phantom appeared to him, and uttered some sinister predictions, which so terrified the monarch that he never entirely recovered his reason ; this infamous trick is said to have been the work of John-sans-Peur, duke of Burgundy, and from that occurrence commenced the most fatal period of Charles's reign. Discipline was set aside for want of a

master; all were desirous of commanding; and this terrible anarchy was increased by the quarrels between the Burgundians and Armagnacs, which deluged France with blood.

Nevertheless, at this unhappy period the queen maintained every species of revelry at court; the misery of the people, and the confusion of the state, did not interrupt her pleasures: in this age were confounded massacres and fêtes; the most terrible truths and romance; transgressions and courtships; all the disorders of the real as well as of the fictitious world.

Isabella took occasion of her husband's insanity to obtain supremacy, but, after having bestowed her confidence on the duke of Orleans and his followers, she suddenly changed, declared herself in favour of the duke of Burgundy, and opposed to the duke of Orleans, because the latter appeared on amicable terms with his wife, Valentina de Milan, for whom she had a professed hatred. This Italian princess had contrived to calm the wandering mind of the unhappy Charles, and so insinuated herself in his favour, that he always saw her with pleasure, and at lucid intervals would converse rationally with her, so that the duchess of Orleans was accused of witchcraft. Her sorceries were, however, her numerous graces; she had brought polished manners, and a taste for refinement, into France, which, in its still uncultivated

state, appeared to its inhabitants a species of magic; and, as Chateaubriand says, “On aurait brulé Valentine de Milan pour sa beauté comme on brula Jeanne d’Arc pour sa gloire.” Isabella has the credit of plotting this ridiculous accusation, which the superstitious people seized with avidity, so that Valentina de Milan was obliged to retire from her husband and the court.

In this sad position of affairs, the government of the health and person of the king was entirely intrusted to Isabella, and that of the affairs of state to her new partisan, the duke of Burgundy. The duke of Orleans, as brother to the king, disputed that right with him, and the queen again changed in favour of the duke of Orleans, to whom the duke of Burgundy was obliged to give place. During these family broils, the unhappy king was so neglected that he sometimes even wanted the necessaries of life. His children were not more fortunate than himself; their governess one day complained that they had neither proper food nor clothing, when Charles took a gold cup which stood beside him, and gave it to the governess, desiring her to procure what was necessary for them.

At length, during a lucid interval, the king assembled a council, for the purpose of remedying the general misery, and the people, being exasperated against the queen, revolted, and obliged her and the duke of Orleans

to leave Paris and seek refuge at Melun; from thence she sent for the dauphin, but the duke of Burgundy would not permit him to go to her. The queen and the duke of Orleans raised troops, and prepared to oppose the duke of Burgundy, and some time elapsed before peace was restored between them; however, a reconciliation at length took place, and the two dukes received the sacrament together, embraced each other, and swore by the Holy Evangelists to preserve amity. The day following the duke of Orleans was assassinated on quitting the Hôtel Barbette, the residence of his sister-in-law, the queen, where he had passed the night, she being in momentary expectation of giving birth to a child, upon which occasion he manifested great anxiety and interest. A modern writer asserts that this child was the miraculous Joan of Arc.

The duke of Burgundy did not attempt to conceal that he was the author of this crime, and triumphed over Isabella, whom he had robbed of her lover and protector, and obliged once more to take refuge in Melun; she, however, shortly afterwards possessed herself of Paris, which she re-entered in triumph, and assembled a council, in which Juvenal des Ursins, the king's advocate, declared that Charles VI. had made choice of the queen his wife as regent of France during his indisposition; a declaration which Isabella had no doubt forced or pur-

chased. Her next act was to authorize the duchess of Milan to demand justice for the murder of her husband, which she did ; but it was no easy task to bring the duke of Burgundy to justice.

This prince had many partisans in Paris, and was both popular and powerful ; he advanced with his army for the purpose of retaking the town, and for the third time Isabella quitted the capital ; but on this occasion she was accompanied by the king, the dauphin Louis, the dauphine, the kings of Sicily and Navarre, and a great many nobles, and transferred the court to Tours ; so that on his arrival at Paris the duke was coldly received, and obliged to enter into a negotiation with the royal family, who returned to Paris.

The treacherous and crafty queen, in 1411, by an unaccountable spirit of caprice and inconstancy, threw herself into the murderous arms of the duke of Burgundy, who had been her most bitter enemy, and on whose head she had set a price. At this juncture England, profiting by the civil feuds, declared war against France, and Henry V. of England gained a signal victory at Agincourt in 1415, by which, with the internal divisions, the kingdom was left almost entirely to the power of the English. At this period Isabella lost three of her sons. Charles, who became dauphin by his brother's death, was opposed by the duke of Burgundy, and

this unnatural mother joined with that prince against her son.

Charles united with the count of Armagnac, and, in order to procure means for carrying on the war with England, seized all the treasures and precious stones which his mother had placed for security in different churches; he also arrested the chevalier de Saligny, a gentleman who professed great attachment for the queen, although she was twenty years older than himself.

This act, which occurred in 1417, overwhelmed Isabella with despair, and she determined to revenge it. While waiting a favourable opportunity to give vent to her resentment, she retired to the château of Vincennes, where she surrounded herself with a most dissolute court: the companion of her guilt there was Louis de Boisbourdon, a gentleman who had gained great distinction by his courageous conduct at the battle of Agincourt. The king, in one of his sensible intervals, when on his way to Vincennes, met Boisbourdon, whom he caused to be arrested on the spot by Tanneguy Duchâtel; he then ordered him to be strangled, his body enclosed in a sack, on which was written, "*Laissez passer la justice du roi,*" and thrown into the river.

The dauphin was so outraged at the infamous conduct of the queen, who publicly acknowledged herself the mistress of the duke of Burgundy, that he arrested and

sent her to Tours, under the charge of Laurent Depuys and others.

Although forty-six years of age, Isabella was still beautiful, and the duke of Burgundy was so much captivated with her that he put himself at the head of eight hundred men, attacked the abbey de Marmontiers, in which she was confined, delivered her, and conducted her to Joigny.

Isabella's aversion for her son was augmented by her arrest; it is said that she more than once attempted to poison him, and that it was the belief in his death that induced the king to appoint her regent. In virtue of that power, she issued orders throughout all the towns in France, enjoining obedience to the duke of Burgundy; she appointed new ministers of the crown, who expedited the affairs of state under the duke's private seal.

The discontented princes, amongst whom was the duke of Orleans, son of the duke who was assassinated, besieged Paris; the palace of the king and dauphin was forced, and the duke of Burgundy obliged to retire. The Pope, Martin V., sent legates to endeavour to conciliate the parties, but in vain. The duke of Burgundy once more obtained the advantage of his enemies, and retook Paris. He made a triumphal entry into the capital with the queen, escorted by twelve hundred men. Isabella was seated on a brilliant car, magnificently

dressed, and proceeded to the residence of the king, the Hôtel Saint Paul, in the midst of acclamations and banners, and through streets strewn with flowers, and still stained with the blood which she had shed,—a sad proof of the levity of the people !

Her first act after the retaking of Paris was to suppress the parliament, and have the throats of all the members cut ; after which she created a new council to enregister her laws. Paris became a scene of carnage ; the prisons were forced and the prisoners massacred ; more than three thousand persons were sacrificed to the fury of the duke of Burgundy and his royal mistress ; the English possessed themselves of Rouen ; and this queen, of odious memory, negotiated the loss of the kingdom with the enemies of France.

She appointed an interview at Meulan with Henry V., king of England, whither she intended to conduct her daughter Catherine, who was then eighteen years of age, in the hope that she might captivate the heart of the English monarch ; but the duke of Burgundy, who foresaw that his country would infallibly fall into the hands of the English, baffled this intrigue of the queen by preventing the interview.

In 1419 a treaty of peace was concluded between the dauphin and the duke of Burgundy, but the enmity was too deeply rooted to suffer it to last, and Jean-sans-Peur

was assassinated on the bridge of Montereau by some of the dauphin's partisans. The vindictive queen resolved to punish her son for the murder of the object of her affections; he was the third lover who had met with a violent death; and in 1420 she concluded the ignominious treaty of Troyes, by which Henry V. of England espoused her daughter Catherine, and was to succeed to the throne of France: a double violation—of the Salique law, as well as of the law of primogeniture, Catherine having had two sisters older than herself; nevertheless Isabella influenced Charles VI. to acknowledge the king of England for his heir, to the prejudice of the dauphin.

This treacherous action of the queen did not succeed, for Henry V. died at Vincennes in 1422, exactly six weeks before the unfortunate Charles VI.

During his frenzied attacks Charles was sometimes so violent that no person dared to approach him; Isabella of Bavaria entirely abandoned him in his malady, leaving him unprovided with proper food and necessaries, so that he was seized with a leprous disease after remaining five months without changing his linen.

At length his criminal wife sent a young girl named Odette de Champdivers, the daughter of a horse-dealer, to attend upon the king. This young person was remarkable for her beauty and gentle disposition, and acquitted herself of the commission confided to her with the greatest

devotion and patience: she alone understood him, and was in effect the only person whose presence he could endure; and Odette spent hours in playing cards, which were recently introduced in France, to while away the heavy time of the maniac and captive monarch.

It is said that Charles VI. feared Odette as much as he loved her, and that she was sometimes obliged to exercise her authority to make him partake of his meals, and even change his dress; so that she was styled "*la petite reine.*"

Her self-sacrifice was complete, and, although the result of her intimacy with the king was the birth of a daughter, she has been thought worthy of commendation for having consecrated her liberty and existence to the alleviation of misery and the consolation of her unhappy sovereign.

Odette de Champdivers' daughter, Margaret of Valois, was acknowledged as sister by Charles VII., who presented her with a handsome dower on her marriage, which took place in the year 1427, with Robert de Harpedanne, lord of Belleville, in Poitou.

After the death of Charles VI., Isabella was engaged in constant quarrels with her son. The French people detested her; she dragged on a miserable and neglected existence; and she, who united the pomp and depravity of Messalina to the sanguinary taste of Catherine de

Medicis, died poor and abandoned at the Hôtel Saint Paul, fifteen days after the treaty of Arras, in the year 1435.

After the ceremony of the coronation of her grandson, Henry VI., king of England and France, which occurred in 1432, he saluted her in passing the windows of the Hôtel Saint Paul, at one of which she was standing; on returning his salute, she retired in tears. “C’était,” she said, “du plaisir de voir son petit-fils orné de deux couronnes.” It would be doing her a great honour to suppose that her tears were the effect of repentance.

Isabella had six sons, all of whom died before her but Charles VII., for whom she expressed the deepest hatred; she had also six daughters, among whom were—Isabella, who married Richard II., king of England, and, after his death, Charles, duke of Orleans; Michal, wife of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy; Catherine, who married Henry V., king of England, and afterwards Owen Tudor, grandfather of Henry VII.; Mary, who was dedicated to the church at Poissy; and Jane, duchess of Brittany.

Isabella’s corpse was conducted at night by the English in a little boat to Saint Denis, where it was buried beside her ill-used husband, Charles VI.; her heart was deposited at the church of the Celestins of Paris.

QUEEN MARY OF ANJOU.

(Reign of Charles VII.)

MARY, daughter of Louis II., duke of Anjou, and king of Naples and Jerusalem, and of Yolande of Arragon, was nine years of age when she was affianced to Charles of France, count of Ponthieu, in 1413. The prince was then only eleven years old, and the marriage was realized nine years after at Tours.

This princess was remarkable for her mildness, piety, and resignation under Charles's numerous reverses; she cheerfully shared her indolent husband's fate during fourteen years that his kingdom was almost entirely under the dominion of the English. She even supported with patience his love of pleasure, and the disdain of some of his many favourites, who were not all so respectful to her as to Agnes Sorel.

At the age of twelve years Charles is said to have formed an attachment to one of his mother's maids of honour; she was the daughter of Charles VI.'s chamberlain, William de Kassignel, lord of Romainville. To celebrate Gerarde's beauty he had the letter K, a swan (cygne), and the letter L, embroidered on his banners, and these hieroglyphical figures were in usage for a long series of years. She married Bertrand de Rochefort,

and after his death, Antoine de Rohan, lord of Rochelle.

Charles greatly esteemed his amiable wife, who contributed as far as lay in her power, towards arresting the disorders of affairs during the invasion of the English: she sacrificed her jewels and all her valuables for the subsistence of the army, and prevented, in conjunction with Agnes Sorel, the discouraged king from retiring to Dauphiné, and by that means delivering up all the meridional provinces to the enemy.

At that time the appearance of Joan of Arc entirely changed the fortune and credit of the French army.

Two women, who were contemporary with the infamous Isabella, are entitled to the gratitude of their country, and the names of Agnes Sorel and Joan of Arc are associated in its welfare: the one conceived noble projects; the other executed them with intrepidity.

Joan of Arc was brought up at Doremy, a village near Vaucouleurs in Champagne, upon the frontiers of Lorraine, and was occupied until the age of seventeen in tending her father's sheep and aiding him in the care of his garden. At the end of February, in the year 1429, she presented herself before the Sire Baudricourt, governor of the town, and requested him to send her to the dauphin, whom she declared Heaven had commissioned her to re-establish upon his throne. The

governor, thinking her mad, dismissed her; but she returned in a few days, and entreated him, for the love of Heaven, to send her, assuring him that on *that day* the dauphin would suffer great loss; and that, if she did not go and raise the siege of Orleans, he would endure still greater. The loss Joan referred to was the unfortunate combat of Rouvrai, which was upwards of three hundred miles distant from Vaucouleurs, and when Baudricourt heard of it, he remembered the singularity of her announcement, and provided her with the means of proceeding to the dauphin.

The persons appointed to accompany her hesitated, fearing to encounter English troops in traversing the country; but Joan displayed such firmness, and so energetically guaranteed their safety, that their confidence was restored, and they arrived safely at Chinon, where the king then was. The same fear of ridicule which deterred the governor from paying attention to Joan's first application retarded her interview with Charles, but she was at length admitted.

It is said, that, when introduced to the monarch, whose dress was in no way different from that of those who surrounded him, she instantly distinguished him, and related her visions and revelations with so much enthusiasm, and made such sensible and even sublime remarks, that the king was embarrassed how to act.

As proof of her power, she was required to perform a miracle, when she replied that she had no power to that effect, but that, if they would conduct her to Orleans, she would give them certain signs of her mission. Charles asked her whether she did not think that Heaven would save France without the aid of arms; she modestly replied, "*Les gens d'armes combatront en mon Dieu, et le Seigneur donnera la victoire.*" All who visited her were astonished at her wisdom and edified by her piety.

The king provided her with a complete suit of armour, excepting the sword, which she requested might be fetched from the tomb of an old warrior in the church of Saint Catherine de Fierbois, and which was found in the spot she described. Charles also supplied her with the entire equipage and retinue of a commander, and sent her to the aid of Orleans. Armed with her sword and sainted banner, she led on the troops to the attack of the fortifications which the English had raised, inspired them with an extraordinary enthusiasm, and struck terror into the hearts of the British soldiers, when she planted her standard on the breach. At the commencement of the action she received a wound in the neck from an arrow, which she plucked out with her own hand; she reanimated the confidence of the soldiers, when she perceived it failing; and at length entered triumphantly

into the town of Orleans, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants whom she had come to deliver. (1429.)

She next advised the king to take possession of all the small towns that surrounded Orleans, in order to proceed to Rheims without opposition, a journey which she strenuously urged the necessity of his undertaking: many of the first generals opposed her wishes, but Joan knelt before Charles, and, embracing his knees, said, "*Gentil dauphin, ne tenez plus tant de conseils inutiles; mais ne songez qu'à vous rendre à Rheims, pour y recevoir la couronne.*"

The dukes of Alençon, Dunois, La Hire, and other warriors, watched her movements with the greatest admiration.

At the siege of Gergeau she was observed to mount on the highest step of the scaling-ladder and wave her banner; at the same moment a stone struck her so violently on the head, that it broke her helmet and cast her to the foot of the walls; but she immediately rose and cried out, "*Amis, amis, sus, sus! notre Seigneur a condamné les Anglais. Ils sont à nous. Bon courage!*" She took the brave Talbot prisoner at Xaintrailles, as also Patay and Scales, and conducted the king in safety to Rheims, where he was crowned with the usual ceremonies, during which Joan of Arc stood near him, dressed in armour, with her banner extended over his head. At

the conclusion of the consecration she prostrated herself before the monarch, and, with a voice half suffocated with emotion, said, “Enfin, gentil roi, or est exécuté le plaisir de Dieu, qui voulait que vous vinssiez à Rheims recevoir votre digne sacre, en montrant que vous êtes vrai roi, et celui auquel le royaume doit appartenir.”

She then declared that her celestial mission was accomplished, and entreated to be allowed to retire to her native village and resume her former avocations; but the king was unwilling to lose the services of the heroine, and required her to make an attack on Paris, where she was dangerously wounded, and again renewed her prayers for a dismissal. “Henceforth,” she said, “she would have no dying regrets.” The count Dunois inquired whether she had had any revelation respecting her end; she replied she had not, but that God had given her no other command than to raise the siege of Orleans and conduct the king to Rheims. She was, however, so earnestly exhorted to continue in the king’s service, that she suffered herself to be persuaded, but not without compunction, as she said an interior voice warned her to retreat.

The king exempted the village of Doremy from all future taxes, ennobled her family and all their posterity, granted them armorial bearings, and bestowed on them the name of “*Des Lis* ;” but the heroine herself was

always called "*La Pucelle*." The historian Daniel remarks that in his time the descendants of her family were still living.

Joan, devoted to new perils, enjoyed none of these honours; she threw herself into Compiègne, which was then besieged by the English and Burgundians, and was taken by a captain of the latter, who delivered her up to Count John de Ligny Luxembourg, and he sold her to the English for the sum of three thousand francs in ready money, and an annuity of three hundred francs for the captor,—infinitely more than Edward III. paid to the soldier who took King John of France prisoner. The English celebrated the imprisonment of Joan of Arc with the greatest demonstrations of delight; but Charles made not the slightest attempt to recover her from their hands: he enjoyed the fruits of her work, without bestowing one thought on her who had opened his road to victory.

Although Joan was a prisoner of war, she was not treated as such, but handed over to ecclesiastical justice, and John Couchon, bishop of Beauvais, and a host of prelates and lawyers, were the judges of a girl of nineteen years, who had neither advocates nor defenders. The process lasted three months, and had sixteen sittings; the original manuscript still exists, and Joan's firm and prudent replies afford subject for continual as-

tonishment. In reply to the first interrogation, which required her to answer truly to every question that should be put to her, she said, "You may probably ask me to say that which I cannot reveal without perjuring myself."

"Promise," said one of her interlocutors, "not to reply evasively."

She answered, "If I save myself, you cannot accuse me of having violated my word, because I have not given you my faith." Among other questions she was asked whether the king had visions. Her reply was, "Send and ask him." She remarked to the bishop of Beauvais, "In becoming my judge, reflect upon the burden you are imposing on yourself." Everything was done to embarrass her, and for the purpose of confusing her, several frequently interrogated her at one time: "Good fathers," she said, in a calm tone, "one after the other, if you please."

Some of her enemies proposed to put her to the torture, but the duke of Bedford refused, lest she should expire under the trial; but this action was the refinement of barbarity. "The king of England," he said, "has bought her at a high price, and wishes to have her publicly burned." Joan endeavoured to escape from her prison, but in jumping from a window was injured and retaken; after which a chain was fastened round her body, and the soldiers who guarded her were never suf-

ferred to leave the room, even when she changed her dress, which was, as she confessed, the most painful part of her captivity. She was condemned to be burned alive as a sorceress.

Her place of execution was the Vieux Marchè of Rouen: opposite the pile two scaffolds were erected for the secular and ecclesiastical judges. Joan was dressed in female attire, with a mitre on her head, on which were written the words, "*Apostate, Relapse, Idolâtre, Hérétique:*" she was supported by two Dominican friars, and manacled. Meekly kneeling, she pronounced a short prayer recommending herself to God, and generously asking glory, honour, and welfare for her king, who had so ungratefully forgotten her. Her piety and resignation affected her judges, and even the bishop of Beauvais, to tears.

Some historians assert that she mounted the woodpile with firmness, harangued the people, and heaped reproaches on the English; others that she ascended with humility as an innocent victim, without bravado or complaint.

She asked for a crucifix, and an English soldier broke a stick and formed a cross, which he presented to her; Joan kissed it with devotion, and pressed it to her bosom.

Her agony was long, in consequence of the extreme height of the pile, which was done to afford a spectacle

to the people ; her torture drew forth some moans, and her last faltering words bespoke confidence in her Saviour, whose aid she implored. Thus died this glorious young girl, who was courageous in combat, prudent in counsel, and of irreproachable manners in the midst of the camp. It is asserted by many historians that after her death, on removal of the ashes, her heart was found entire.

She has been the theme of many poets of different countries ; the most distinguished of whom are Schiller, Voltaire, and Southey. Châteaubriand says that in her character are to be found “ the simplicity of the peasant, the weakness of the woman, the inspiration of the saint, and the courage of the heroine.”

It is not less astonishing than true, that not one effort was made by Charles VII., either by way of ransom or reprisal in favour of Joan. According to some historians, the cavaliers at court were jealous of the glory of the female warrior ; and the king's favourite, Agnes Sorel, feared that her youth and devotion would make too deep an impression on the sensible heart of the monarch. Twenty-five years after her death, the king, who doubtless felt remorse for this shameful neglect, caused the process of her trial to be looked over, when the judgment was publicly pronounced *null, abusive*, and *unjust*, and two solemn processions were made in Rouen

as a form of apology ; nevertheless the judges were not punished, but all those who assisted in her condemnation died miserably, and two suffered the same execution.

Some writers assert that there existed a mutual affection between Joan of Arc and Charles VII., and that after his coronation she lived with him as his mistress ; but there is not the slightest proof that any such intimacy existed, and his neglect of her, even before her capture, is sufficient evidence to the contrary : moreover he was at that time devoted to Agnes Sorel.

This lady was born in 1409, in the village of Fromanteau in Touraine, one of the most beautiful provinces in France, and was daughter to St. Geran, of the family of the count of Clermont, and of Catherine de Maignelais. Her father most carefully directed her education, and Isabella of Lorraine, queen of Sicily and duchess of Anjou, was so much interested in her, that she appointed her maid of honour.

This queen arrived at the court of France in 1431, in the hope of obtaining the liberty of her husband, who was then a prisoner of war : Agnes, who accompanied her, was at that time in all the radiance of her beauty ; her intellectual conversation was as captivating as the elegance of her form and the sweetness of her smile ; she was called "*la belle des belles*."

Isabella of Lorraine engaged Agnes to use her influ-

ence with the king towards procuring her husband's release, and the monarch was so pleased with her, as also was the queen, Mary of Anjou, that the latter, unsuspecting of the future, entreated the queen of Sicily to suffer her to enter her service.

The king loaded Agnes's family with gifts and honours, and his passion for her betrayed itself in the costly presents of dress and equipages which he made her—*“Comme de porter grands et excessifs atours de robes fourrées, de colliers d'or, et de pierres précieuses, et tous ses autres désirs.”* She was the first lady not of royal blood who wore diamonds in France; hitherto the use of them had been confined to the queens and princesses only.

For five years the queen retained Agnes in her service, daily honouring her with her affection and favour; she appeared to be the only person at court who was ignorant of the king's attachment. Charles VII. passed his days at the chateaux of Loches and Chinons, in the midst of pleasures and fêtes of which she was the ornament. But Agnes, who heard constant reports of the alarming progress made by the English, felt that the blame of the king's indolent repose would be attributable to herself, and determined to rouse him from his lethargy.

She used every persuasion which patriotic zeal could devise to inspire him to action and urge him to glory,

and succeeded in reanimating the courage and energy of the monarch; who but for her generous efforts, would have abandoned the siege of Orleans, notwithstanding he was excited to undertake it by the valiant maid of Vaucouleurs.

At that time it was customary to have astrologers as well as fools in the royal palaces, and great faith was placed in the predictions of those sooth-sayers. The king one day consulted a celebrated magician respecting the future fate of his mistress, when he replied that she was destined for many years to be the object of passion to a great monarch. Agnes immediately assumed a grave air, and said,—“Then I must go to the court of England to accomplish my destiny, sire, for you will soon lose your crown, and Henry will unite it to his own.”

Many of the courtiers were jealous of the influence she possessed over the mind of the monarch, and the most envious of the ladies pitied the queen; but the people of France, by universal acclamation, acknowledged that Agnes Sorel was the instigator of their king's reaction, and the credit and glory of all Charles VII.'s most vigorous resolutions are attributed to this favourite.

The following lines are said to have been written by Francis I., on seeing her portrait:—

“Gentille Agnès, plus d'honneur tu mérite,
La cause étant de France recouvrir,
Que ce que peut dèdans un cloître ouvrir,
Clause nonnain, ou bien devot ermite.”

The dauphin, Louis XI., who was of a most fierce and ungovernable disposition, and could not even support paternal discipline, much less that of the king's mistress, and who was moreover jealous of the influence she possessed over his father, launched forth the most bitter sarcasms against her, and one day, in a warm discussion at the château de Chinon, in the year 1445, struck her; Agnes demanded justice for the insult, and Louis was exiled to Dauphiné.

Charles built a beautiful château for Agnes Sorel at Loches, where she frequently resided, it being her favourite place of retirement; she had also another château near Vincennes, called “Beauté,” from which she acquired the title of “La Dame de Beauté;” she was also the Lady of Issondun, and of La Roche-Servièrre, and countess of Penthhièvre, in consequence of some possessions which she had in Brittany. All these and many others were the gifts of the king.

She was residing at Loches in the year 1449, when Charles who was still engaged in the war with England, arrived at Jumièges, a celebrated Norman abbey; and Agnes, having heard that a conspiracy had been formed

against the king, in which the dauphin was concerned, immediately proceeded thither to warn him to take precaution; or, as some writers assert, for the purpose of rekindling the flame which had begun to languish in the monarch's heart: but the injunctions she gave the king respecting his safety she neglected herself, and the dauphin, in revenge for the punishment she had been the cause of subjecting him to, contrived to have poison administered to her, which caused the premature birth of a daughter, of which she died at Jumieges, in 1449, aged forty years.

Agnes was very much regretted by the clergy and the poor, to both of whom she gave abundantly; when she felt her end approaching, she assembled around her all the young ladies of her household, whom she most feelingly exhorted to retain the path of morality and virtue, and impressed upon their minds the frail and unstable nature of mere personal advantages—a truth of which many women, like herself, are not convinced until a late hour.

She had three daughters, who were legitimized and acknowledged by Charles VII., who richly endowed them: their names were Charlotte, married to Jacques de Bréze, count de Maulevrier, who in a fit of jealousy killed her with his own hand; Jane, who espoused Antoine de Beuil, count de Sancerre, and to whom Louis XI. gave

forty thousand gold crowns for her dower; and Margaret, wife of Oliver de Coetivi. Agnes Sorel named Jacques Cœur, superintendent of finances, and Stephen Chevalier, treasurer, her executors. She was interred in the collegiate church of Loches; her tomb was placed in the centre of the choir, which was filled with bronze and marble tablets covered with inscriptions in her praise. The canons of Loches basely proposed to Louis XI. to destroy these records; but that king, whose vengeance was satisfied, told them that they should first render back all the benefits and donations they had received from that lady; and the tomb existed until the year 1792.

Before the death of Agnes Sorel, Charles VII. took a lively interest in her cousin, Antoinette de Maignelais, who was born at his court in 1434. In 1448 he gave her the lands of Maignelais for a possession, and at the age of sixteen married her to the Baron de Villequier, lord chamberlain and dignitary of the crown; nevertheless the king's attachment for her was not less known than that of her predecessor, whose influence she inherited.

At her marriage, Charles gave her the islands of Oléron and Marennnes, and in 1458 presented her daughter, Jane de Maignelais, with eight thousand two hundred and fifty francs, on the occasion of her union with the

Sire of Rochefort. Antoinette had also another daughter; but neither of them was acknowledged by Charles VII., her marriage having averted the scandal attending their birth.

She was a widow at the period of Charles VII.'s death, which occurred in 1461; and, dreading the pitiless rigour of Louis XI., she retired to the court of the duke of Brittany. This prince greatly resembled Charles VII. in person, and, like him, found much to admire in Antoinette, who passed the remainder of her days with him, and died peaceably at his court, after presenting him with two sons and two daughters.

The queen, Mary of Anjou, is accused by some authors of weakness, in not resenting these infidelities of her husband; but Arquetil relates that, when some of the courtiers remarked the irregular conduct of Charles VII., she replied, "He is my lord, and has all power over my actions, but I have none over his."

Her fierce and rebellious son Louis held her in great esteem, although he disobeyed her; and the queen's foresight and intervention on more than one occasion prevented him from revolting against the king, who nevertheless starved himself to death, under the impression that his unnatural son would poison him.

From the period of her widowhood, which commenced in 1461, Mary of Anjou devoted herself entirely to the

practices of religion, and died, aged fifty-five, in the year 1463, at the Abbey des Châtelliers, in Poitou, on her return from a pilgrimage which she had made to Saint Jacques in Gallicia. Her body was transported to Saint Denis.

Mary was the mother of twelve children:—the dauphin, who succeeded his father as Louis XI.; Charles duke of Normandy, who was poisoned; and two other princes who died young: and eight princesses, among whom were Radegonde, wife of Sigismond, duke of Austria; Catherine, countess of Charolais; Yolande, wife of Amédée IX., duke of Savoy; Jane, duchess of Bourbon; and Madelaine, who married Gaston de Foix, prince of Viane.

After the death of Charles, Mary resided at Bourges; she founded twelve chapels, in which she established twelve priests, who every hour in the day recited prayers for the unfaithful husband who had rendered her life a series of sacrifices, and herself a model of resignation.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE OF SAVOY.

(Reign of Louis XI.)

MARGARET, daughter of the first James Stuart, king

of Scotland, at the age of three years was affianced by treaty, in 1428, to the dauphin Louis, who was then only eighteen. The marriage was celebrated at Tours, by the bishop of that town, eight years after the promulgation of the treaty.

This alliance was the result of political considerations, and Margaret had many difficulties to surmount in her voyage to France. The English, who foresaw that the marriage would cement a union between their common enemies the Scotch and French, endeavoured to prevent her embarkation. Having failed in the attempt, they offered the king of Scotland, Rosburg, Berwick, and several other places, which James rejected, and they then sent out a fleet to stop the progress and take possession of the princess on her way; but some Flemish vessels, which they mistook for Margaret's escort, diverted their attention, and she landed safely at La Rochelle.

The dauphine, whose amiable disposition entitled her to the affection of her husband, was soon treated by him with indifference, for, though he respected her merits, Louis was incapable of a real attachment, being selfish and narrow-minded.

She is represented as having been clever and intellectual, and possessed great taste for the fine arts, which she loved and cultivated. It is said that, passing through one of the rooms of the palace, and seeing Alan Chartier,

the Coryphæus of the learned of that period, sleeping on a bench, she approached and imprinted a kiss upon his mouth: her attendants expressed their surprise, when she replied “that it was not the man she kissed, but the mouth which pronounced such sublime oracles.”

Margaret had exceedingly plain features, but her sister Isabella was very beautiful. The duke of Brittany, who proposed to marry her to his son, sent ambassadors to Scotland to see and take back a description of her. They informed him that she was handsome, upright, and graceful, but that she appeared very simple. “My friends,” said the duke, “return at once to Scotland, and bring her here; she is all that I desire, and I will have no other: your clever women do more harm than good. By Saint Nicholas! I consider a woman sufficiently clever if she knows the difference between her own robe and her husband’s pourpoint.”

The amiable but unfortunate Margaret was the victim of some court intrigue. She one day overheard herself ungenerously calumniated by a gentleman of the court, named James du Tilley, which so sensibly affected her that she was seriously indisposed in consequence, and became so weary and disgusted with her existence, that, on being offered some remedy, she repulsed it, saying, “*Fi de la vie ! qu’on ne me’en parle plus*”

Margaret died at Châlons-sur-Marne, in 1445, aged

twenty years, without having children, or ascending the throne for which she had been destined. She was buried in the church of Chalons, and thirty-six years after her death her ashes were transferred to the abbey of Thouars, in Poitou, but her tomb was destroyed by the Protestants.

The dauphin, who during Charles VII.'s reign lived in disgrace at Dauphiné, and whose confined resources did not permit him to sustain the dignity of his rank as hereditary prince, thought it advisable to seek the hand of Charlotte of Savoy, who had been promised by her father a dower of six hundred thousand gold crowns.

She was the daughter of Louis II., duke of Savoy, and of Anne of Cyprus, and was cheerfully accorded to Louis, to the prejudice of the duke of Saxony, to whom she had been previously affianced. They were married at Chambery, in 1451; but Charlotte was not a more happy wife than her predecessor, though she possessed greater personal advantages. She was intelligent, modest, and exemplary, but she had not sufficient energy to moderate and soften the harsh and selfish Louis, who was considered a cold-hearted tyrant by all women of sensibility, but who, though he professed a thorough contempt for the female sex, nevertheless excepted his wife, Charlotte of Savoy, whom he several times conducted to Orleans, Tours and Paris. On one of her visits

to the latter town, it is said that the queen received a most brilliant welcome ; an elegant boat awaited her, on board of which a magnificent collation was provided, and among other refreshments was a stag composed of sweatmeats, round the neck of which the queen's arms were suspended.

She landed at the Celestins, where the then customary performance of the Holy Passion was enacted ; after which she proceeded on horseback to the palace of Tournelles, where another grand entertainment was provided for her.

Louis even at times suffered her to offer advice in the council, and by her intervention a reconciliation was effected between the king and the duke of Normandy. He also enjoined his son to honour the queen, though he afterwards encouraged him to disobey her.

Notwithstanding Louis XI. acknowledged his wife's merits, he often treated her with great indifference, and committed many gross infidelities, sometimes even lavishing his attentions on women of mean birth. The obscure attachments of this disgusting and crafty monarch would be as well omitted, did not the names of some of his favourites figure in history. The first was Phelise Renard, by whom he had a daughter called Guyette, who married Charles de Sillons. She was succeeded by Margaret de Sossenages, daughter of the governor of Dau-

phiné, Henry II., baron of Sossenages, and Antoinette de Saluces. At the age of eighteen she was married to Amblard de Beaumont, who died shortly after their marriage. On his accession to the throne in the year 1446, Louis conducted her to court, where she died in child-bed with her third daughter, ten years after. Margaret's three children were pronounced legitimate: they were, Mary, wife of Aynard de Poitiers, and grandmother of the celebrated Diana of Poitiers; Isabella, countess of Saint Priest; and Jane, who married the Bastard of Bourbon.

When at the court of Burgundy, Louis attached himself to Huguette de Jacquelin, whom he deserted for Madame Gigou, the widow of a merchant of Lyon, who had been killed by one of Louis's soldiers. During the expedition of Picardy, the widow appeared before the king to claim justice for the murder of her husband, and Louis, unmindful of the calls of generosity, granted her request upon the condition that she would follow him; he, however, deviated from his natural avarice and made her some presents. On one occasion he ordered a jeweller, named Passefilon, to make her a valuable ornament, which was taken to the king by his wife. The tyrant compelled her to become his mistress, and, to gratify the complaisant and dishonoured husband, appointed him to

a parliamentary office, of which he despoiled some other person.

Shortly after he lost his son, the Duke de Berri, whom he had by Huguette de Jacquelin; and his grief was so violent on the occasion, that he made a vow to the leaden image of the Virgin, which was always suspended from his hat, to attach himself henceforward exclusively to his wife and queen. Louis married the widow Gigou to Jean-le-Bon, who afterwards had his eyes put out for endeavouring to poison him, to serve the duke of Burgundy.

Queen Charlotte offended her husband by her natural affection for her country, Savoy, as also for her attachment to Burgundy, whose sovereign was Louis's great enemy. She endured his harsh reproaches with meekness, and unhesitatingly submitted to many privations to gratify his avaricious disposition. At length this cruel king confined her in the château of Amboise, in a most miserable state of penury, and allowed her merely what was absolutely necessary for food and clothing; equally ungrateful and forgetful that it was her dower that had enabled him to enjoy prosperity during his season of poverty and disgrace. A contemporary historian says, "*Charlotte eut beaucoup à souffrir des bizarreries de son époux; il la tint bien petitement accompagnée et mal accoutrée: aussi, pour la grande crainte qu'elle*

avait de lui, et pour autres rudesses qu'il lui faisait souvent, il est bien à croire qu'elle n'avait pas grandes voluptés en sa compagnie."

After a wearisome union of twenty years, the king died, but Charlotte did not long enjoy her liberty, having followed him to the tomb at Amboise three months after, in the year 1483.

This queen had six children:—Charles VIII., who succeeded his father; Francis, Joachim, and Louisa, who died young; Anne de Beaujeu, who was regent during her brother's minority; and Jane, wife of Louis XII. Charlotte was buried at Notre-Dame-de-Clery, by the side of her husband.

ANNE OF FRANCE, REGENT.

(Reign of Charles VIII.)

PERHAPS the only claim to sincerity that Louis XI. possessed was in his attachment to his daughter, Anne de Beaujeu, who was not less celebrated for beauty than for her profound genius, sagacity, courage, and political talents: the sceptre was never wielded with greater vigour than during her regency.

In 1461 her father negotiated a marriage for her with

the marquis of Pont-à-Mousson; but this young nobleman died suddenly, and Anne became the wife of Peter II., duke of Bourbon and sire of Beaujeu: the king gave her a hundred thousand gold crowns on her marriage.

Peter de Beaujeu was mild and easily governed; he had, moreover, so little confidence in his own talents, that he submitted in all things to his more spirited wife; this disposition was most agreeable to Anne, who bore a great moral resemblance to her father, being artificial, ambitious, and vindictive, but judicious withal, and capable of inspiring a lively interest in those whom she was desirous of making her partisans.

The Sire of Beaujeu's submission and Anne's artifice so entirely captivated the suspicious mind of Louis XI., that they alone were admitted into the château of Plessisles-Tours, the gates of which were closed against all Frenchmen. From the heights of his donjons the dying despot, 1483, declared his daughter Anne regent, and guardian to her young brother, Charles VIII.; to the prejudice of his wife, Charles of Savoy, and the princes of the blood royal, amongst whom the duke of Orleans was much disappointed at the decision.

Madame de Beaujeu required all the assistance of her great talents to enable her to preserve this authority, which was, for the first time, confided to a daughter of

France. She had two rivals to contend with—Louis duke of Orleans, who was heir to the throne in the event of Charles VIII.'s death, and her brother-in-law the duke of Bourbon. If these two princes had united their interests, Anne would infallibly have lost her power, for the court and people were equally weary of the insupportable yoke of her father, Louis XI., and dreaded her government, in consequence of the great resemblance her character bore to his. Nevertheless, by her skilful management she contrived to maintain her authority.

She first created a division between John of Bourbon and the duke of Orleans, and these two noblemen, after becoming enemies, preferred to yield to the princess rather than to each other. She then proposed to submit the decision of the regency to the States-General, and to retain the government confided to her by her father, provisionally, until the settlement of the question.

During the period occupied in electing the members throughout the provinces for the union of the States, Madame de Beaujeu diligently endeavoured to gain the esteem of the nobles and people by a moderate government. She suppressed many heavy taxes, and released and recalled many persons unjustly imprisoned and exiled by her capricious and despotic father. At the same time she satisfied them, by giving up to public judgment three ministers, vile agents and intimates of the

late king, who had abused his confidence, and incited him to the committal of many crimes, the catalogue of which was already endless. Olivier le Daine was hanged; Dayac was publicly flogged, after which his ears were cut off and his tongue pierced through; and John Cottier, another vampire of the court, and doctor of Louis XI., who had amassed immense wealth by imposing on the monarch's credulity and fear of death, was condemned to pay an enormous fine, which left him but a modest subsistence for the rest of his days: so by her wise and judicious management she gained great popularity.

The young king appeared at the assembly of the States, at Tours, in 1484, and declared his intention to follow the counsels of his sister; and, the States having approved his decision, Madame de Beaujeu continued to hold the reins of government, in which she exerted all her talents, and acted with great policy. She is, however, reproached with having offered Provence to the duke of Lorraine, for the purpose of attaching that skilful general; but the young king publicly proclaimed that he never would consent to such mutilation of the kingdom; she also committed an error in having restored Rousillon and Cardagne to Ferdinand-le-Catholique, king of Spain, although he had not yet paid the sum of money they had been substituted for.

In order to indemnify the duke of Bourbon for his

disappointment in regard to the regency, she presented him with the sword of the constable of France. She also recalled two meritorious persons who had been unjustly exiled by her father, Honore d'Urfe and Poncet de la Riviere, and reformed numerous abuses.

Madame de Beaujeu was most scrupulous in the exaction of respect to herself and her authority. Being one day present when the king and the duke of Orleans were playing a game of tennis with some other noblemen, she gave her judgment against the chance of the duke; and this prince, naturally passionate, and who considered his sister-in-law his enemy, addressed some insulting remark to her. This affront, which took place in the presence of the king, was unpardonable in the estimation of a woman who discovered an enemy in the man for whom she had conceived a secret attachment. She would not venture to arrest the first prince of the blood royal immediately, but she assembled the council, and the duke of Orleans, suspecting danger, retired to the protection of the duke of Alençon.

Madame de Beaujeu, who foresaw that a civil war would not only cause much bloodshed, but also compromise her authority, sent confidential messengers offering him a sincere reconciliation if he would ask her pardon; but the duke of Orleans, who placed little confidence in the promises of an artful and vindictive woman, sent back

her agent and strengthened his position. He was joined by the count Dunois, the duke of Bourbon, and other nobles. Madame de Beaujeu's danger was imminent ; she assembled troops, and formed two armies : one, commanded by Marshal de Gié, she sent to Guyenne, in 1485 ; the other, under the orders of Monsieur de Graville, she herself accompanied with the young king to Bourbonnais, against the duke of Orleans, where her vanity and ambition triumphed in the absolute submission of the heir to the throne of France.

In 1486 the Bretons revolted against their sovereign duke, or rather against his unworthy minister Landois ; and the duke of Orleans, profiting by this circumstance, clandestinely quitted the court and retired to Brittany. Madame de Beaujeu on this occasion displayed energy and prudence ; she represented to the duke of Brittany that in giving an asylum to a rebel prince he was exposing himself to the resentment of France. The duke of Orleans added to the regent's discontent by offering to divorce his wife, her sister Jane, of France, in order to marry the heiress of Brittany, to whom he was much attached. The regent sent troops, who took possession of several towns in Brittany, and her spirit and courage were crowned with success in the battle of Saint Aubyn, in which the duke of Orleans, after performing prodigies of valour, was taken prisoner by Louis de la Tremouille,

and confined, by order of Anne, in the great tower of Bourges, where he remained upwards of three years. His wife, Jane of France, repeatedly solicited his deliverance from Anne de Beaujeu and from the young king; the former was inexorable, and the latter so accustomed to respect his eldest sister's will, that he declined for some time to interfere, especially as by rendering the duke his liberty, as the first exercise of his power, he would be mortifying Madame de Beaujeu. He was, however, persuaded by the tears of his youngest sister, the duchess of Orleans; and, in order to escape the vigilance of the regent, made a pretext of going to Bourges with a hunting-party, where he waited in a neighbouring château, while he sent two attendants with directions to have the doors of the tower opened for the duke of Orleans. The prince on arriving embraced the knees of Charles, who affectionately pressed him in his arms, and, not content with spending the day with him, insisted on having a bed placed for him in his own room; and from that moment a sincere and lasting friendship existed between them.

On hearing of this circumstance, Madame de Beaujeu felt that her authority had expired; and immediately wrote a letter to her brother, assuring him that she regretted *not* the loss of her power, but of his good graces. The king reassured her in that respect, and proved his

esteem for her by consulting her on all important affairs. As the last stroke of policy and power, Madame de Beaujeu succeeded in marrying the king to Anne, heiress of Brittany, by which the reunion of Brittany and France was effected. Charles VIII. had been for some time affianced to Margaret, daughter of Maximilian I., archduke of Austria, and of Mary of Burgundy; and although this princess had the title of dauphine, the regent sent her back to her father, and the monarch espoused Anne of Brittany in 1491.

After this epoch Madame de Beaujeu gave no further advice to the king, excepting on the occasion of his expedition to Italy, of which she did not approve, and in the concerns of his private life. When he went to Naples the title and duties of the regency devolved upon the queen, and Anne resolved to retire to Bourbonnais, where, surrounded by a numerous suite of ladies and cavaliers, she lived on her own domains in the greatest magnificence.

On the accession of the duke of Orleans, under the title of Louis XII., he never troubled her retreat, but generously forgot all her severity: some person having recalled to his memory the wrongs he had received under the regency, he replied, "*Ce n'est pas au Roi de France à venger les injures faites au Duc d'Orléans.*"

Madame de Beaujeu became a widow in 1503, and

died at the château of Chantelle, in Bourbonnais, in 1522, aged sixty years. She was buried by the side of her husband at the priory of Savigny. Her only daughter, Susan, was married to the constable of Bourbon, who was afterwards celebrated for his defection under Francis I.; he was at the head of a sect called "*Frondesurs*."

Madame de Beaujeu's private character is without blemish; her predominant passion having been ambition: she was often heard to remark that no woman, either in youth or at an advanced age, had experienced greater temptations than herself.

QUEEN AND REGENT ANNE OF BRITTANY.

ANNE of Dreux was the daughter of the last sovereign duke of Brittany, Francis II., by whose death she became sole heiress of that duchy. This princess was born at Nantes in 1476, and, though remarkably tall, was graceful and beautiful; she had, however, one leg shorter than the other, but this defect was hardly perceptible. Her mother, Margaret de Foix, having no other child, paid undivided attention to her education, which she confided to Madame de Laval.

There were several competitors for her hand, among whom was Alain d'Albret, father of John, king of Navarre, and seven other children; but she declined his assiduities, being only thirteen years of age, whereas he was upwards of forty; moreover, she dreaded his numerous family, most of whom were older than herself. The duke of Orleans was also her suitor; but the prince of Wales, eldest son of Edward IV., king of England, would have been preferred, had not his premature and violent death snatched him from his brilliant position. Anne also refused the count de Rohan, who, notwithstanding his pretensions to Brittany, adopted this bold device: "*Duc ne daigne, roi ne puis, Rohan suis.*"

The heiress of Brittany had some difficulty in discarding Maximilian of Austria, king of the Romans, who, in 1490, had been solemnly affianced to her in the cathedral of Nantes, but whom she declared she never would marry because he had a son older than herself by his first marriage with the duchess of Burgundy, who was kept in a state of perfect indigence by the avarice of his father the emperor. Anne was really attached to the duke of Orleans, who had taken refuge at her father's court when he revolted against the regent; but he was already married to Charles VIII.'s sister, Jane of France, and, moreover, was taken prisoner at the battle of Saint Aubyn, and kept a close captive in the great tower of Bourges.

The regent, Madame de Beaujeu, was desirous that Charles VIII. should marry this princess, who opposed the union for some time, but at length consented to it, and Margaret of Austria, who had been affianced to Charles by the treaty of Arras, and enjoyed the title of dauphine, was sent back to Austria, as before stated; and thus the house of Austria received a double affront through France. In 1491 she was married to Charles VIII., at Langeais, in Touraine, and accompanied her husband to Plessis-les-Tours, where the court was then held. She afterwards proceeded to Paris, where she was received with great splendour. The coronation took place at Saint Denis, in 1492, and during the ceremony the duke of Orleans supported the crown upon the brow of the queen whom he so tenderly loved.

The joy on the occasion was universal: Anne was entitled the queen-duchess, and returned from Saint Denis to Paris amidst universal acclamations. It was a popular fête on the occasion of the aggrandizement of the kingdom, and she at once obtained from the king the confirmation of the Bretons' privileges. Although acquainted with her husband's infidelities, Anne was a tender and affectionate wife; she both loved and honoured Charles, who has been justly styled the most honest of men and best of princes.

Amongst the favourites to whom the king attached

himself were Anna Solieri, whom he met during his campaign in Italy in 1495, and the marchioness Tere-sina Pallavicini, with whom Charles lived at the little town of Chieri, during the siege of Navarre, and by whom he had one daughter, named Camilla, who lived and died in this retreat.

But the queen's chagrin at these faults in her husband was not to be compared to that which she experienced at the death of the dauphin, Charles, her last surviving child, who expired shortly after the king's return from Italy ; and the monarch, though deeply afflicted at this loss, repressed his own grief in order to solace hers. All the nobles of the court endeavoured to assuage her sorrow, by diverting her with tournaments and entertainments. The duke of Orleans gave a superb fête at Amboise, to which all the court were invited, and displayed so much magnificence and immoderate gayety, that the jealous courtiers did not fail to observe to the queen that the dauphin's death rendered the duke of Orleans a second time heir to the throne ; upon which, the queen, forgetting her former sentiments for the duke, conceived so forcible a resentment against him, that she obtained his dismissal from court, which he never revisited until he was king of France.

After his return from Italy, Charles was a model of conjugal fidelity ; he was tenderly attached to Anne,

who lived happily with him until his death, which occurred in 1498. The widow of this good and valiant prince, having lost her four children before her husband, was obliged to descend from the throne, for which, however, she was again destined. Until this period the mourning habit of queens had been white, but Anne of Brittany adopted the deepest black; she ordered a magnificent funeral for her husband, and erected a superb mausoleum to his memory.

During Charles's expedition to Italy she performed the function of regent with talent and judgment, although at that time only eighteen years of age; and when at his death the administration of the government of Brittany devolved upon her, she willingly applied herself to it, and promulgated many useful laws.

Anne of Brittany well knew the power she possessed over the heart of the duke of Orleans, then king under the title of Louis XII.; having remarked to her ladies of honour that "she did not despair of her happiness, having it in her power to become reigning queen of France again, if she wished it;" and which in effect she did; but the regularity of historical relation requires the remainder of her life to be deferred, Louis XII.'s first wife, Jane of France, claiming prior attention.

QUEEN JANE OF FRANCE.

(Reign of Louis XII.)

THE marriage of the duke of Orleans with Jane of France was a union which was forced by her despotic father, Louis XI., whose orders none dared to disobey. Jane was amiable, but exceedingly sensitive, and, being deformed, she feared to inspire the young prince with disgust. She was only twelve years of age when the marriage was celebrated, in 1476, and the duke of Orleans, who was then but fourteen, secretly protested against an alliance which he could not refuse, and was obliged to simulate an attachment which he did not feel, in order to avoid the resentment of the king. At length Louis XI.'s death put an end to this odious slavery, but the prince did not openly separate from Jane, out of respect to her brother King Charles VIII.

Nevertheless, this princess was worthy of a better fate, and omitted none of the duties of a fond wife: she was sincerely attached to her husband; and when he was vanquished at the battle of Saint Aubyn in 1488, and during his captivity at Bourges, forgetting her own wrongs, she manifested the greatest tenderness for him, and never ceased her intercessions for his delivery until she obtained it.

The duke of Orleans was not insensible to these proofs of goodness and affection, but he was disappointed at Jane's sterility ; and as he was devotedly attached to Anne of Brittany, he conceived the project of obtaining a divorce after the death of Charles, and marrying his widow, who, though she deplored her husband, admired and esteemed the duke of Orleans, who had now a double attraction for her in being master of the crown of France.

The amiable Jane did not ask that sacrifice at the hands of her husband which gratitude alone should have commanded ; and the new king assembled the council, and explained his motives for dissolving the marriage, which had been forced by fear with a princess whose relationship to him was within the degrees prohibited by the Church, and by whom he despaired of having an heir to the throne.

Pope Alexander VI. nominated three bishops to examine the justice of Louis's demand, and the queen, when interrogated on these subjects, answered with firmness and modesty, and generously sacrificed herself to promote the happiness of the king and husband she loved.

Garnier, who wrote the continuation of Vely's History, energetically paints the agony of both during these proceedings. "Imagine," he says, "a princess educated

under the shadow of the throne, and accustomed from her infancy to receive marks of submission and respect, traduced before the pontiff's commissioners, and in the position of a suppliant obliged to listen to injurious and disagreeable suppositions, and to receive formal declarations of disgust and aversion from the lips of a husband to whom she was fondly attached ; hardly venturing to give vent to a complaint or suffer her tears to fall, lest she should give pain to him in whose hands her fate was. But in this abyss of misery and grief, perhaps she was less to be pitied than the author of her woes ; for she had at least the consolation of her innocence, and of that constancy which is inspired by a conscience pure and without reproach ; whereas Louis, who was naturally just, what reproaches must not his conscience have heaped upon him ! What torments must he not have suffered when, in consequence of an odious proceeding, he found himself obliged to hear facts, which should have been buried in the shade of silence, publicly disputed, and, in fine, was reduced in some measure to profane the majesty of the throne and the sanctity of matrimony, as well as to prosecute and confuse an innocent princess, his wife and relation, who, far from deserving his hatred, had been his best friend and succour in adversity !”

The same historian who traced this touching picture

expressed his belief that, if Louis XII. had foreseen the extremities to which he would be obliged to proceed, he would never have suffered the trial to take place.

The judges, who were freed from all scruple by the acquiescence of the queen, pronounced the nullity of the marriage, and Alexander VI., requiring the aid of Louis XII. in Italy, expedited the bull of divorce, which was conveyed to the king by Cæsar Borgia, a natural son of the pontiff: Louis presented him with the duchy of Valence, and the title of duke of Valentinois, for this service.

The king, who was sensible of the generous sacrifice Jane had made, gave her the duchy of Berri, and several other extensive domains, as well as an annuity of twelve thousand crowns, which was a very considerable sum at that time. She retired to Bourges, where in 1501 she founded the convent of the Annonciades, which was a very austere order of devotees, whose rules she followed, although she did not adopt the dress. This pious princess lived six years after her misfortune,—if the renunciation of worldly grandeur for a life of tranquillity can be so called,—and died in 1505, in the odour of sanctity, at the age of forty-one. The tomb of this canonized queen was destroyed by the Huguenots in 1562; it had the reputation of performing miracles while it existed.

QUEEN ANNE OF BRITTANY.

FAITHFUL to his sentiments of love for Anne of Brittany, which eleven years had not obliterated, Louis XII., after his divorce in 1499, married the beautiful widow, then twenty-four years of age, who reascended the throne of France amidst the acclamations of the people. Some voices were raised against the irregular conduct of Louis in divorcing a virtuous wife ; but he was king, and universally beloved, so that these clamours were easily stopped.

The marriage contract with Louis XII., which stipulated that if Anne died without children the duchy of Brittany should return to her own relations, and that she should reserve the sovereignty of it during her life, was very unlike that with Charles VIII. Garnier remarks that, in the first, it was a sovereign espousing his vassal, who was obliged to abide by his imperious laws ; in the second, a queen, who joyfully yielded her hand to her lover.

The ceremony took place at Nantes, and was attended with many splendid entertainments. Anne is represented as having had a most dazzling complexion of snow-white and carnation ; she was tall and graceful, and though rather lame, contrived to give an air of majesty

to her gait. Naturally eloquent, she conversed with dignity; her character was lofty and commanding; but she was sometimes unjust, vindictive, and self-willed.

Her court was more brilliant than the court of France had ever hitherto been, and from this epoch a remarkable revolution took place in the general manners. She set an example of industry to the ladies who surrounded her, always occupying some part of the day in embroidery and elegant fancy work, and she vigilantly observed the conduct of the princesses, so that propriety and decorum were never more respected than during her rule.

These inferior occupations did not prevent Anne from attending to the duties of the kingdom. She invariably received all foreign princes and ambassadors in the plenary court, with a splendour and dignity that were renowned throughout Europe.

The excellent Louis XII., so justly styled "the father of his people," feared to augment their expenses by any acts of extravagance, having on his accession reduced the taxes to one-half what they formerly were; and the liberalities and favours of the crown were consequently dispensed by the queen, who bestowed them with discernment, and drew the greater portion from the revenues of Brittany. After the unprofitable expedition to Milan, from which the officers returned despoiled of all

they possessed, she proceeded to the army at Lyon, where she warmly welcomed the brave and unfortunate warriors, upon whom she bestowed money and new equipages, and then entreated them in gracious terms to continue their faithful and precious services to the king. She also gave out of her own private revenue twelve vessels of war, which she equipped for the expedition against the Turks in 1501.

Louis XII., during his expedition to Italy, having penetrated into Genoa in 1502, the inhabitants entertained him with great magnificence. During these fêtes, in which he was surrounded by numerous Italian ladies in all their beauty and brilliant attire, he distinguished the Marchioness Spinola, who was remarkable for her grace and elegance.

Without considering the power, and above all, the vindictive disposition of her royal rival, the beautiful marchioness forsook all the world for the king, who resided with her until his return to France: when quitting Genoa he made her promise not to follow him, as he dreaded the consequences of the queen's jealousy and suspicion. Louis was, however, always the subject of her thoughts, for when a false report of his death reached Italy, in consequence of a dangerous illness with which he was attacked at Blois in 1503, the too sensitive Genoese could not support the unexpected stroke, and she

obstinately refused to partake of any nourishment ; but her death was accelerated by grief before it could take place by starvation. The king, on receiving the news of this self-sacrifice, was sensibly touched by so much ill-placed devotion, and made the poet d'Anthon celebrate the constancy of the unfortunate Tomasina, whose tomb he ornamented with various inscriptions, "*en signe de continuelle souvenir et de spectacle mémorable.*" This liaison was carefully concealed from the queen, who would otherwise have infallibly manifested her displeasure.

During Louis's severe illness at Blois, Anne attended him day and night with unceasing assiduity ; her grief was profound, as well as that of all France, for in fact the life of the king was not more precious to the queen than to the people. Nevertheless, seeing that his recovery was very improbable, her anxiety for him did not prevent her thinking of herself ; and she had the policy to conceive the design of going with her daughter Claude into Brittany ; previous to which undertaking she loaded several vessels on the Loire with all her valuables. The Marshal Gié arrested this convoy, and even detained the queen-duchess herself.

Anne never forgave this affront, but persecuted the Marshal all her life ; but the king and all France applauded his patriotic and courageous conduct, which

prevented the queen from realizing her project of marrying the Princess Claude to Charles of Austria, by which Brittany would have been united to Spain, whereas it was Louis's wish that it should continue to be allied to France by the union of that princess with the count of Angoulême, afterwards Francis I.

As soon as Louis XII. recovered, Anne, who ought to have considered the conduct of Marshal Gié, as meritorious, and esteemed him for his zeal, was base enough to revenge herself, and never ceased her importunities till the king exiled this faithful servant. But that did not satisfy the queen-duchess, who created most iniquitous accusations against him, traduced him before both houses of parliament, and obtained a sentence of death against him. This judgment was, however, loudly protested against, and the parliament of Toulouse were content with despoiling the good citizen of his government for five years.

Another serious fault is attributed to Anne of Brittany. After the victories gained by the French at Giaradda and Ravenna, the ambitious pope, Julius II., was reduced to extremities. Louis XII. could have dictated the most glorious conditions for France at the gates of Rome, but the queen suffered her superstitious scruples to be overruled by the artful pontiff, who prevailed on her to exert her too great influence over the king, by which the con-

queror submitted to the yoke of the vanquished, and a most disadvantageous treaty was concluded in 1513, in favour of Julius II., who placed France under an interdict, and excepted Brittany.

On the occasion of the council of Pisa, the king, who was vexed at her interference, said, "Do you consider yourself wiser than all the heads of the most celebrated universities, who have approved it? And has your confessor never told you that women have no voice in the affairs of the Church?"

Louis often found in this beloved and cherished wife a secret and domestic enemy, but he had, fortunately, sufficient vigour to paralyze her efforts when opposed to the glory and welfare of France. She even had her own particular body-guard, composed entirely of Bretons, and the king suffered this, and many other acts of self-will, in consideration of her good qualities. She protected and patronized the learned of her time, and the father of Clement Marot was created queen's poet,—a creation she no doubt thought advisable in order to hand her virtues and graces down to posterity.

The historian Garnier remarks "that she was a tender, complaisant, and submissive wife to Charles VIII., who appeared to have taken little pains towards attaching her, and who was far less faithful than Louis XII.,

to whom she was cross, capricious, and haughty, and whose heart she nevertheless entirely possessed."

Anne erected many religious edifices; one particularly worthy of notice was a convent of Cordeliers, so called "*en l'honneur des liens dont le Sauveur du monde fut garrotté la nuit de sa Passion*:" she also manifested great esteem and veneration for the pious Francis de Paule, whom she chose for her son the dauphin's godfather.

A premature accouchement caused this queen's death, which occurred at the royal residence of Blois, in the year 1514, when she was thirty-eight years of age. The king and Bretons, who deeply regretted her, bestowed a magnificent funeral on her remains, which were exposed for three days on a bed of state, after which they were transported to St. Denis, and interred beside her first husband, Charles VIII. By her will her heart was sent to the Carthusian monastery at Nantes, where it was received in a golden urn, and placed in the chapel that was dedicated to the ashes of the dukes of Brittany. Anne of Brittany had four children by Charles VIII., all of whom died before her; and four by Louis XII., but two only survived her:—they were Claude, wife of Francis I., king of France; and Renée, who married Hercules II. d'Este, duke of Ferrara. The prayer-book of this queen is preserved in the royal library at Paris;

the numerous vignettes it contains are exceedingly curious.

QUEEN MARY OF ENGLAND.

ALTHOUGH Louis XII. was deeply afflicted at the loss of his wife, his grief was still more profound at the confused condition of the affairs of the kingdom; and, although fifty-three years of age, he determined to secure peace by a marriage with Mary, sister to Henry VIII., king of England, and daughter of Henry VII. and Elizabeth.

The duke of Longueville, who was a prisoner in England, negotiated this marriage between Louis XII. and Mary, who at the age of sixteen was considered the most accomplished and intellectual princess of the time. She was first affianced to the celebrated Charles Quint, but, less sensible to the charms of ambition than to those of love, she had already given her heart to a young English nobleman, named Charles Brandon, who was first page to Henry VIII., and afterwards dignified by his royal master with the title of duke of Suffolk.

Notwithstanding the king of England was aware of the reciprocal attachment of these young people, he accorded the hand of his sister to the king of France; but

the splendour of the crown had no charms for Mary, who shed abundance of tears at the decision. After having encountered a frightful storm in the Channel, she landed at Boulogne, where she was received by the young count d'Angoulême, afterwards Francis I., king of France, the dukes of Alençon and Bourbon, and the counts Vendôme, St. Paul, and Guise. Mary's reception was most brilliant, and the amiable and handsome young count d'Angoulême was captivated with the lively and beautiful English princess.

The marriage was celebrated with many splendid fêtes and tournaments, in the year 1514, at Abbeville, where the king arrived escorted by fifteen hundred gentlemen; and the queen confessed herself dazzled and delighted with the magnificence and chivalry that surrounded her; but her smile was always directed towards the young duke of Suffolk, who accompanied her to France in the quality of ambassador.

Although related to Louis XII., the count of Angoulême paid great court to the wife of his father-in-law, in consequence of which his mother, the countess of Angoulême, closely watched the actions of the queen, and was not slow in discovering the attachment between her and the duke of Suffolk. This caused her great anxiety, from fear that Mary's love for the duke and indifference for her husband should be the cause of an

intimacy which might produce an heir to the kingdom, and for ever eclipse the hopes of Francis count of Angoulême, and heir-presumptive to the throne of France. The count therefore promised the duke of Suffolk, that if he would engage faithfully to maintain his respect for the queen, and preserve her honour, he would assist him in a secret marriage with her after Louis XII.'s death, and provide them with a suitable establishment in France, if England disapproved of the union: he moreover assured him that his movements were watched, and that any particular attentions to the queen would infallibly ruin him. The duke of Suffolk faithfully kept his promise, and acted with the greatest discretion: nevertheless the young queen was never alone; the baroness d'Aumont slept in her apartment at night, and the countess d'Angoulême watched her through the day.

The king, though weak and declining, gave many splendid fêtes for the entertainment of his young wife, and to gratify her changed his manner of living. A contemporary author says, "He was always accustomed to dine at eight o'clock, whereas now he dines at twelve; and instead of retiring to rest at six o'clock in the evening, he frequently remains up until midnight."

Louis XII. died two months after his marriage, and Mary, not being pregnant, was in 1515 obliged to cede the throne to the princess who had so carefully

watched her conduct. Three months after, Francis I., true to his promise, had the marriage celebrated between Mary and the duke of Suffolk, which her brother Henry VIII. approved, notwithstanding their violation of the usual forms; and, shortly after, the union was again solemnized in England.

The duchess died at the age of thirty-seven, in the year 1534, having left one daughter, who was mother to the unfortunate lady Jane Grey.

LOUISA OF SAVOY, REGENT.

(Reign of Francis I.)

THIS princess was the daughter of Philip II., duke of Savoy, and of Margaret of Bourbon, and was born at Pont d'Ain in 1476. Louisa was only twelve years of age when she married Charles d'Orleans, count of Angoulême, to whom she brought a dower of thirty-five thousand livres.

She was obliged to conform to the will of Louis XI., and the taste of her husband, who loved retirement, and with whom she lived in the château de Cognac, where she nourished the germs of ambition in the hope that she would one day have an opportunity of developing

them. She had at that time no society but the few noble families who resided in the environs; and her only pleasure consisted in equestrian exercises and the chase: her elegant horsemanship was the admiration of all the surrounding country.

At the age of twenty Louisa of Savoy was a widow, and the mother of two children,—one was Francis I.; the other Margaret, afterwards queen of Navarre, whose education she carefully attended, notwithstanding her youth.

Charles VIII., whose court was at Amboise, invited her there, and the countess d'Angoulême hastened to quit Cognac, and appear in all the brilliancy of her youth and splendour. After Charles VIII.'s death, Louis XII. also, who had lost both his sons, welcomed this princess as the mother of the heir-presumptive. All these honours irritated Anne of Brittany, who treated the countess of Angoulême as a subject, whereas she wished to live on those terms of familiarity which are natural between two mothers whose children are affianced. In consequence of this, Anne hated Louisa; for Anne, although queen, had no male posterity, and might soon lose her crown, whereas Louisa, who was only a countess, had a son who was heir-presumptive to the throne.

Although these two women could with difficulty main-

tain the exterior forms of politeness, yet Anne, when dying, named Louisa the guardian of her daughter, who espoused the count of Angoulême three months after, in the year 1514.

Mary of England, who was far less ambitious than her predecessor, treated the countess d'Angoulême with more politeness and attention, although she so vigilantly spied the actions of that queen. At length the death of Louis XII. raised Francis I. to the throne, and the countess d'Angoulême's ambition and love of show were gratified by her being admitted into the councils, and dignified with the title of duchess, as well as enriched by the possession of vast domains: she shared the government with her son, whose confidence in her was unbounded.

On leaving France for the expedition to Italy in 1515, Francis placed the reins of government in the hands of his mother, to the prejudice of the queen, whose youth was the pretext for this unjust preference; Claude might, however, if aided by upright counsellors, have avoided the faults which her mother-in-law committed, notwithstanding her talents. The regent's avidity and extravagance caused the loss of Milan; for in the reign of Louis XII. this conquered country had been treated with humanity and moderation, and the garrisons were regularly paid; but afterwards the money was not forth-

coming, and the Swiss, no longer receiving their due, abandoned the French, who were obliged to resign their conquest. Jacques de Baulne, lord of Samblancay, the superintendent of finances, had promised the army four hundred thousand crowns, which the regent persuaded him to give up to her, to disburse the expenses of her mad prodigalities.

When Francis I. examined into the source of these disorders, Madame d'Angoulême first contrived to obtain the receipts she had given Samblancay from the commissioners, in whose hands they had been placed ; and afterwards denied that she had ever received any sums of money from the superintendent of finance. This minister, who could not sustain his protestations for want of proofs, was condemned to be hanged ; and the duchess of Angoulême had the barbarity to suffer the innocent to perish for her fault. The old lord of Samblancay, who had served under three kings, walked with intrepidity to the gibbet of Montfaucon, on which he breathed his last.

The duchess's love of coquetry and her pretensions to beauty, although forty-four years of age, produced still more direful consequences. In 1521 she became captivated with the young count de Montpensier Bourbon, constable of France, and adopted a thousand manœuvres to attach him to her. The constable, instead of encouraging her

advances, treated them with disdain, and the regent, as a last effort, offered him her hand. This was a brilliant proposal for the count of Bourbon, as by accepting it he would have been father-in-law to the king, and also have acquired immense power; nevertheless he refused it with terms of insulting raillery; for he had always professed the greatest antipathy to Francis I., as well as to the duchess of Angoulême, who was fifteen years older than himself: moreover, he was attached to Margaret de Valois, afterwards queen of Navarre, who was styled at court the tenth muse and fourth Grace, on account of her elegant form and beautiful features.

Finding herself despised by the man she hoped to win, the outraged regent was determined to be revenged, and immediately commenced proceedings for despoiling the constable of the wealth and possessions of his late wife, Susan de Bourbon, daughter of Madame de Beaujeu. The chancellor Duprat undertook the cause, and the process lasted seven months, during which time the duchess, who neglected nothing that could injure her enemy, placed all his lands under sequestration. In 1523 he was deprived of the vanguard of the army and of the government of Milan; and in a fit of desperation abandoned his king, betrayed his country, and sullied his sword and name by the fatal resolution he made to place himself at the head of the enemy's army: when fighting against

Francis I., at the battle of Pavia, he took his king prisoner.

Francis I., on writing this sad news to his mother, who was the author of these troubles, commenced his letter with these words : “ *Tout est perdu, hors l'honneur.* ” She was accused by the whole nation of having been the cause of Bourbon's defection, of having abused the power confided in her, and ruined the fortune of France.

Louisa endeavoured by most diligent exertions to repair all these evils. During her son's captivity at Pizzighitone, she negotiated with England so skilfully and successfully, that she contrived to detach that country from the emperor, Charles Quint, and procure its alliance with France by a secret treaty. She gained over Pope Clement VII. and the Venitians to her interests ; and after providing for the security of the frontiers of the kingdom, and stirring up the whole of Europe against Charles Quint, she wrote him to stipulate for the freedom of her son.

The greatest eulogy is due to the duchess d'Angoulême for the energy and talent she displayed under the difficult circumstances with which she had to contend ; but it would have been far more laudable for her to have reflected upon the danger she was incurring, and the evils she was likely to produce, by her persecution of

the first captain in Europe, and by that means have avoided them.

At length Charles Quint offered Francis I. the choice of receiving as hostages all the bravest cavaliers of France, or the two young princes; and Madame d'Angoulême's decision does her great honour, in having turned a deaf ear to the sentiments of nature, and preferred preserving all the most illustrious and skilful generals for the good of the country. In 1526 the treaty of Madrid, which rendered Francis I. his liberty, was concluded, and the regent herself conducted her two grandsons to Andaye, to answer as hostages for their father's fidelity to his engagements.

Although the regency terminated on the return of the king, Madame d'Angoulême preserved great influence in the administration, and unceasingly endeavoured to restore peace to the exhausted country. Francis I. gave her full power to treat with Margaret of Austria for a peace with the Low Countries; the conference took place at Cambrai in 1529, and the foundation of the agreement was the liberty of the young princes.

These two princesses made their entry into Cambrai the same day with great pomp, and signed the treaty known by the name of the "*traité des dames*;" which, although not very advantageous to France, does some credit to the regent, who had the gratification of receiv-

ing in person her two grandsons at Fontarabia, and seeing calm restored to France.

The duchess of Angoulême was attacked with the plague shortly after, at Fontainebleau, where she went to inspect the works of a castle which the king was building. She, however, temporarily recovered, and wishing to fly from further infection, took the road to Blois, but was stopped at Grez, in Gatinais, by indisposition from its effects. The appearance of a comet filled her with terror, having always experienced a great dread of death, and being persuaded that this meteor announced the approach of her end, which occurred three days after, at the age of fifty-five, in the year 1531.

Her remains were interred with great magnificence and solemnity at Saint Denis.

In her coffers were found after her death, the enormous sum of fifteen hundred thousand gold crowns, which would more than have sufficed for the ransom of the king. The journal of her life has been published; it does not, however, contain anything of interest, being merely notes of a domestic nature concerning herself and her children.

The contemporary writers, whom Louisa patronized, offer many apologies for her, notwithstanding her superstitions and faults; but although more modern and disinterested authors do justice to her talents, they cannot

pardon her odious treachery to Samblancay, nor her treatment of the count of Bourbon, by which she sacrificed the public interest to gratify her ambition and vengeance.

QUEEN CLAUDE OF FRANCE.

THIS princess was born at Romarantin in 1499, and affianced to the count of Angoulême at Plessis-les-Tours in 1506; she was married to him at the age of fifteen, in the year 1514, at Saint Germain-en-Laye. Although endowed with the amiable qualities of her father, Louis XII., Claude had neither the talent nor energy of her mother, Anne of Brittany. She was unfortunate in having an inconstant husband, whom she tenderly loved, and an imperious mother-in-law in the regent, Louisa of Savoy; but her patience and gentleness enabled her to endure the humiliation of her self-love, and her domestic griefs, with resignation and dignity.

She was educated in a virtuous court under the scrupulous eye of her mother, and was remarkable for her piety and sweetness of temper, by which she obtained the appellation of “*la bonne reine.*” But nature was not bountiful to her in physical gifts, having been of short

stature, and in a slight degree lame; but though far from handsome, the expression of goodness dwelt upon her countenance.

Anne of Brittany, who appreciated the excellent qualities of her daughter, was fearful that the count of Angoulême would not render her happy, and endeavoured to dissuade Louis XII. from consenting to the union. She was desirous that Claude, in accordance with the agreement in the treaty of Blois, should marry the grandson of Ferdinand of Arragon; but the French protested against that alliance, because the princess's dower consisted of the provinces of Brittany, which would have been separated from France by a foreign union, in consequence of which these political considerations instigated Louis XII. to give his consent, hoping that the young count would at least value Claude for her virtues and merits.

Although the queen was treated with indifference by her husband and the regent, she experienced great consolation in the sincere homage which the nation rendered to her estimable qualities. In 1525 she was attacked with a dangerous malady, of which she died at the age of twenty-five, and was buried in the royal sepulchre of Saint Denis.

Claude had seven children, four of whom were girls; she was the mother of the dauphin, Francis, who was poisoned at Valence in 1536; Henry II., king of France:

Charles, duke of Orleans ; Madeline, wife of James V., king of Scotland ; and Margaret, who married Philibert Emmanuel, duke of Savoy : the other two died young.

QUEEN ELEONOR OF AUSTRIA.

THE treaty of Madrid in 1526 gave the eldest sister of the redoubtable Charles Quint to Francis I., but the engagement was not ratified until after the treaty of Cambrai, in 1529, which restored peace to France.

Eleonor was the daughter of Philip le Beau, archduke of Austria, and of Jane la Folle, who, being left a widow at the age of twenty-six by a husband whom she adored, was so violently affected at his death that she lost her reason, and during the space of forty-four years languished in the most profound misery, forsaken and neglected by all.

Her daughter Eleonor was born at Louvain in the Low Countries in 1498, and gifted with all the most brilliant endowments of nature. A contemporary author, who saw her, describes her as having laughing eyes, with eyebrows of fine black ; a complexion of lilies and roses, small ivory teeth, a delicately formed mouth, and a mellifluous voice. In 1514, Frederick II., brother of

the elector palatine, who was at the court of Charles Quint, became greatly enamoured of her, and the princess responded to his affection, which, though the attachment was kept very secret, nevertheless reached the ears of the emperor.

One day Eleonor having received an affectionate billet, the politic Charles Quint entered her apartment, unannounced, and wrested it from her hand before she had time to conceal it. The irritated monarch would have arrested Frederick had not the laws of hospitality prevented him; he, however, gave him an order to quit the court, and Eleonor's marriage with the old king of Portugal was decided. In 1519 the princess was united to her infirm husband, who left her a widow with two children in 1521.

On her return to the court of Spain, Prince Frederick again renewed his attentions to Eleonor in the hope of obtaining her hand and heart; but the young queen, having tasted the pleasures of the throne, and attaching invaluable charms to the possession of a crown, refused him. Her brother promised her hand to the constable of Bourbon as the price of his services; but, whether that prince was indifferent respecting the promised recompense, or that Charles Quint, as was his usual habit, failed to keep his word, is uncertain, but Eleonor, who acquiesced in all her brother's ambitious views, gra-

ciously accepted the hand of Francis I. During his imprisonment at Madrid the princess was delighted with the amiable and chivalric manners of her future husband, whose captivity she contributed to soften, as also that of the young princes who were sent as hostages. The marriage was celebrated at the abbey of Vegres, near Bordeaux, in 1530.

Eleonor loved France, and was delighted with the brilliant welcome she received: after partaking of the many elegant entertainments which were provided for her in the different towns through which she passed, she at length entered Paris, and was crowned at Saint Denis in 1531.

The suavity of her manners and goodness of her heart rendered her the cherished idol of the court and people; but she was as unfortunate as her predecessor, Claude, in the infidelities of her husband, who neglected her for the Duchess d'Etampes. The queen sensibly felt her husband's neglect, and even complained to her former lover, Frederick II., count palatine, who was at the court of France, and whom she made the confidant of her domestic troubles.

During the life of Claude, Francis I. had several obscure attachments, amongst whom were "la belle Ferronière," who was so called because her husband trafficked in iron. That king nevertheless encouraged the

cultivation of the arts and belles lettres, and patronized the learned whom he had brought with him from Italy. His court was brilliant with the luxury and gayety introduced by the ladies; balls and fêtes, of which Francis I. was particularly fond, succeeded the more grave and imposing tournaments; and when he visited the residences of Madrid, Chambord, and Fontainebleau, he was accompanied by a society of the most beautiful ladies at court.

Some authors assert that amongst his favourites was the celebrated Anne Boleyn, granddaughter to the duke of Norfolk, and maid of honour to queen Claude. An ancient writer says, "*Cette jeune demoiselle était belle, spirituelle, et d'une aimable vivacité; mais, dans un âge aussi tendre, fort débauchée en sa conduite.*" But this assertion is equally doubtful and uncharitable, for when, after her marriage with Henry VIII. at Westminster in 1536, she was condemned to be beheaded, Anne Boleyn was not accused, in the process of her trial, of any indiscretion during her service at the court of Francis I.

In one of the brilliant entertainments of which he was so fond, the king was captivated with Frances de Foix, who was born in Brittany in 1495, and descended from a house not less noble than that of the royal family, but deprived of all fortune by the existence of three elder

brothers. At the age of twelve years she was bestowed in marriage on John de Montmorenci Laval, count of Châteaubriant.

At this inexperienced age the young victim was conducted by a jealous husband to an old château, where they lived together for seven years, isolated from all the world, and during that space of time the young countess was permitted to see none but her husband and attendants. Nevertheless the report of her beauty reached the court, where business of great importance obliged Monsieur de Châteaubriant to appear in 1515. He left the countess in Brittany, and the king did not fail to reproach him for his inhumanity in confining his young wife in a lonely place apart from all society. The count protested in vain that she hated the world, and was devoted to retirement. Francis I. insisted that it was unnatural and impossible; and Monsieur de Châteaubriant, imagining that his submission to the king would forward his own views, conducted his wife to court.

At the very first entertainment in which she appeared, the fears of the unhappy husband were aroused, for she made so forcible an impression on the heart of the king that the count became at once the victim of jealousy, which, in the sequel, proved to be but too well founded. The young countess, proud of a virtue which had never

yet been attacked, placed too much reliance on her own strength and constancy, and fell before the tempter ; her husband, in a transport of rage, refused the dignities offered him by Francis I., abandoned his process, the court, and his wife, now no longer his, and retired to Brittany. Madame de Châteaubriant's two brothers, Odet-de-Foix de Lantrée and Thomas-de-Foix de Lescun, more tractable, were appointed marshals of France, and the eldest, by his unskilful conduct, caused the defeat at the battle of Pavia.

During the expedition of Francis I. to Italy, his mother, the regent, neglected no opportunity of humiliating the countess, who, unhappy and ill used, on hearing of the defeat and captivity of the king, the death of her eldest brother at the battle of Pavia, and the imprisonment of the other two, one at Guyenne and the other at Navarre, felt herself without a protector, and addressed a respectful letter to her husband, entreating permission to return to him. Monsieur de Châteaubriant received her, but subjected her to a more wearisome imprisonment than before. He refused to see his repentant wife, and confined her in a tower, the room of which was hung round with black, to which he daily sent her the coarsest food.

In 1526 Francis I. returned to France, and the count, fearing he would recall Madame de Châteaubriant to the

court, entered the tower with some hired assassins, and announced to her that she must die. The young victim, weary of a captivity which was far more terrible to her than death, cheerfully suffered her veins to be opened, and died without uttering a complaint, in 1527.

The king was greatly irritated at this cold-hearted and atrocious deed, but the vindictive husband took refuge in England, and before many months had expired the charms of Mademoiselle de Heilly enabled Francis I. to forget the unfortunate Countess de Châteaubriant. She was buried in the church of the Mathurins de Châteaubriant, where a magnificent tomb was erected to her memory. She had no children.

The most celebrated of all Francis I.'s favourites was Anne de Pisseleu de Heilly, a grand-daughter of the house of Dreux, issue of blood-royal, and daughter of the Lord of Meudon, commandant of a hundred men-at-arms. She was born in Picardy in 1508, and admitted into the service of Louisa of Savoy, duchess d'Angoulême, in the quality of maid of honour. She accompanied this princess, when at Mont-de-Marsan, to the meeting of the king after he was set at liberty in 1526. Francis I. was much captivated with Mademoiselle de Heilly, who was then eighteen years of age, and united a beautiful person to an intellectual mind: these advan-

tages gained for her the appellation of “*la plus savante des belles, et la plus belle des savantes.*”

The king made a declaration of love to her in verse, and the young lady, either from love or ambition, responded to the sentiments he expressed. Francis I. built a magnificent hôtel for her in the Rue de l'Hirondelle, near the Pont St. Michel, at Paris, and ornamented it with a variety of courtly devices, a style much in vogue at that period. He also provided her with a husband, to give her a less equivocal character at court. This person was a ruined gentleman, named John de Brosse, to whom she was married in 1527, and who received the government of Brittany and the duchy d'Etampes, as the price of his complaisance; this union did not, however, change the position of the duchess, who remained in high favour at court, far away from her infamous husband, who was despatched to attend his duties in Brittany.

The duchess d'Etampes received universal homage; all favours were obtained through her, and she participated in the affairs of government. She wisely made friends with the constable Montmorenci, admiral Chabot, and the chancellor Duprat,—three ministers who were at the helm of affairs, and to whom she was as necessary as they were to her.

Her father, William de Pisseleu, had three wives and thirty children, and the duchess did not fail to make use of

her influence in their favour, while in her elevated post. The first ecclesiastical dignities were bestowed on her brothers; two of her sisters were provided with wealthy abbeys, and the others were united to the first houses in the kingdom. She also protected and encouraged the learned in conjunction with Francis I.'s sister, the queen of Navarre, who entertained great friendship for her.

Surrounded as she was with admirers who did homage to her beauty and talent, courted for the power and influence she maintained in her brilliant situation, and intoxicated with the felicity which the possession of the king's love bestowed on her, the duchess might, perhaps, have enjoyed a temporary happiness, had it not been for the rivalry which existed between her and the celebrated Diana of Poitiers, favourite of the dauphin, afterwards Henry II.

These two reigning beauties hated each other; the one sighed for the grandeur and power which the other possessed. Diana was older than the duchess d'Etampes, but her great beauty and intriguing spirit placed her on a level with the woman whom she aspired towards replacing. Their mutual dislike was the constant topic at court, and more than once France had nearly been the victim of their dissensions.

The duchess d'Etampes invariably endeavoured to make Diana of Poitiers feel the advantages she herself

possessed in reigning young, and took pleasure in repeating that she was born the same day that Diana was married; the latter revenged herself by petty intrigues to undermine her in the king's favour, but her efforts were fruitless.

When Charles Quint visited Paris in 1540, the duchess d'Etampes declared in open council that the emperor invariably broke his word, and was therefore not to be trusted; and she advised the king to detain him prisoner until he had fulfilled his engagements with France. Francis greatly admired the foresight of his favourite, but was too generous and hospitable to yield to her proposals. The king, on presenting the duchess d'Etampes to the emperor, said, "*Voyez vous, mon frère, cette belle dame? Elle est d'avis que je ne vous laisse pas sortir de Paris que vous n'ayez revoqué le traité de Madrid.*" The emperor frowned, and replied coldly, "*Si l'avis est bon, il faut le suivre;*" and from that time Charles Quint made every effort to gain the heart of the duchess.

One day the favourite, according to the usual ceremony, presented him the towel after washing his hands, previous to seating himself at table, when Charles Quint purposely dropped a diamond ring of immense value; the duchess picked it up and presented it to him, when he gallantly replied, "*Gardez-le; je suis trop heureux d'avoir l'occasion d'orner une si belle main.*" The

duchess was constrained to accept the gift, but she was none the less faithful to Francis I., to whom she incessantly complained of the perfidious projects of the emperor.

It has, however, been said that, out of ill-will to Diana of Poitiers, she conspired with the Marshal d'Aunebaut to prevent the success of the dauphin's expedition against the Spaniards, and by that means betrayed her country, from petty and dishonourable motives. And a short time after this event the same envious wish to injure Diana in the person of the dauphin, and the hope of obtaining an asylum with the emperor in the event of the king's death, induced the duchess to perform an act of great perfidy, as, in 1544, she sold the secrets of the state to Henry VIII. of England and Charles Quint, for the iniquitous promise they made her to elevate the duke of Orleans to the throne, to the detriment of his brother the dauphin. She also, with the same view, secretly advised with the forces of the dauphin's enemies who besieged Perpignan, and obliged the prince to blockade that place.

In fact, the enmity of these two women caused the taking of the principal towns in France, the scattering of the army for the security of the capital, towards which the enemy made rapid advances, the loss of many gallant officers, and the ignominious treaty of Cressy ;

all which disasters were the result of the criminal revelations made to Charles Quint by the duchess d'Etampes' agent, the count de Bassut.

The king grew both melancholy and morose before his death : nevertheless, neither the numerous faults which she committed, nor time, which destroys all things, ever weakened his love for the duchess, who lived with him for twenty years.

At length his death, which occurred in 1547, put a term to the brilliant fortune of the favourite, who was neglected by those she had loaded with favours, haughtily attacked by her enemies, and without resources or protection obliged to give place to her rival, to whose vengeance she was exposed, and who, it may be almost said, mounted the throne with Henry II.

Her husband, of whom she had never taken any notice, refused to receive her : the proud mistress of Francis I., in this critical position, refused to bend the knee to the favourite of Henry II. ; and the triumphant duchess of Valentinois astonished all France by disdainng to ill-treat her fallen rival, whom she left at liberty to retire to a beautiful country residence, where the duchess d'Etampes spent her latter years in solacing and protecting the followers of the Protestant religion, whose faith she had secretly embraced.

She quitted the court at the age of forty-four, and

lived in such strict retirement until her death, that the circumstances attending it, and the exact period, are unknown; it is, however, certain that she was living in the year 1575, when she was sixty-seven years of age.

While Francis I. was devoting himself to the pleasures of the court and the enjoyment of the duchess d'Etampes' society, the neglected queen, Eleonor of Austria, was earnestly endeavouring to establish peace between France and Spain, and, as far as lay in her power, frustrated the mischievous policy of the duchess, by attempting to inspire her powerful brother, Charles Quint, with more equitable and honourable sentiments. But the opposing influence of the favourite left her an inferior part to perform, and she chiefly occupied herself with religious duties, substituting hunting and fishing as an occasional diversion.

After the death of the king, Eleonor, who had no children, left France and retired to join her brother in Brabant. In 1556 she left the Low Countries for Spain, where she died at Talavera in 1558, aged sixty years. Eleonor was interred at the Escorial.

QUEEN AND REGENT CATHERINE DE MEDICIS.—DIANA OF POITIERS.

(Reign of Henry II.)

GRANDNIECE of Leo X., and only daughter of Laurent de Medicis, duke d'Urbain, and of Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne-Lauraguais, Catherine de Medicis was born at Florence in 1519, and educated in the bosom of her family, who governed that country with much celebrity.

On her marriage with the young duke of Orleans, afterwards Henry II., in 1533, her uncle, Pope Clement VII., conducted her himself to Marseilles, where the ceremony was performed, and presented her on the occasion with a dower of three hundred thousand crowns.

This queen is equally celebrated for her talents and her crimes. Her ambitious and worldly-minded uncle, the pontiff, on taking leave of her after her marriage, gave her this express recommendation,—“*fa figliuoli* ;” and Catherine followed his counsel, for the constable de Montmorenci often remarked that Henry II. had but one daughter who resembled him, which was his natural daughter, Diana d'Angoulême.

On her arrival in France Catherine was received by the king, Francis I., and Eleonor of Austria, attended by a most brilliant court, amongst whom were the duchess d'Etampes and Diana of Poitiers ; but, beautiful as the

ladies who composed this court were, Catherine outshone them all, not only by the loveliness of her features and the dazzling whiteness of her complexion, but also by the elegance of her movements, her form being exceedingly majestic, though not tall. Her countenance most deceitfully expressed the feelings of a gentle and sensitive heart; skilful in displaying her attractions, at the tender age of fourteen, she exaggerated by artificial aid the advantages with which nature had adorned her.

During the first year of her marriage the young princess politically avoided all appearance of ambition, in a court already occupied by the two rivals Diana of Poitiers and the duchess d'Etampes, with both of whom she contrived to live in the greatest harmony. She also displayed great tenderness for Francis I., who, gratified by the amiable manners and agreeable conversation of his daughter-in-law, frequently remarked that she was made to command. The king was fond of the chase, and Catherine affected a passion for that species of amusement, by which she repeatedly met with serious accidents. She was skilled in archery and rode gracefully; it was this princess who invented pommelled saddles: she was excessively fond of dancing, and excelled in ballets. By these trifling diversions Catherine deceived the general opinion, which at that time gave her no credit for more than ordinary talent; nevertheless she observed

all, studied politics, traced her future plans, and thus, by great sacrifices and perseverance, erected the edifice of her power.

The dauphin, Francis, having been poisoned in 1536, as some historians assert, through Catherine's means, the young duke of Orleans became heir to the throne, and, as he had no children by Catherine, was desirous of divorcing her; he could not, however, perform this act without the king's acquiescence, and Francis, who was much attached to his daughter-in-law, warmly opposed it. Henry's mistress, Diana of Poitiers, also exerted her influence to prevent the rupture of this marriage, as she felt flattered by the princess's regard for her, and feared that another wife might treat her differently.

When the death of the king raised her husband to the throne, the queen pursued the same line of conduct, dissimulating her ambitious taste for governing, and only studious to render herself popular by her complaisant manners. Perhaps Henry II. discovered the haughty and violent soul of his queen beneath her gentle exterior, for she possessed no authority, having only the title of queen, whereas the duchess of Valentinois was virtually so.

She was crowned at St. Denis, by the cardinal de Bourbon, archbishop of Sens, and made a solemn entry into Paris, accompanied by twelve duchesses,

amongst whom were Diana d'Angoulême, Henry's natural daughter.

However, in 1552, when the king quitted France for his expedition to Germany, he left the regency to the queen, who performed nothing worthy of notice beyond conciliating all hearts in order to commence more securely her career of intrigue and crime when she should become mistress of absolute power. A celebrated historian says, "Catherine de Medicis contrived to obtain great popularity, and by her artfulness and profound dissimulation became the head of a large party of followers, caressing the king's favourite, whom she detested; flattering the pride of the constable by continually asking his advice, although she considered him her greatest enemy; and hesitating at nothing in order to attain her end."

Until the death of Henry II. there was nothing remarkable in the character of this queen beyond the voluntary favours she bestowed upon her husband's favourite, who was twenty years older than herself. Although bigotry was at that time much in vogue, she was but a lukewarm Catholic, and never assisted at any of the religious processions until she had procured the best singers and musicians from Italy to compose her chapel; nevertheless, under the pretext of zeal for her faith, she counselled and directed the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Henry II., who was killed by the count of Montgomeri at a tournament in honour of the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth with Philip II., king of Spain, left the regency to his widow, with whom he had lived twenty-five years, and who, after ten years of sterility, had ten children, three of whom were successively kings of France.

Catherine's first act of power was to dismiss her rival the duchess of Valentinois, for whom it was no longer necessary for her to assume the appearance of friendship. This lady's family were no less celebrated for their noble origin than for their immorality: she was born in 1499, and was daughter of John of Poitiers, lord of Saint Vallier, and granddaughter of Louis XI., by Margaret de Sassenage. At the age of thirteen years she was married to Louis de Brézé, grand seneschal of Normandy, count of Maulevrier, and grandson of Charles VII. by Agnes Sorel.

Diana would probably have been irreproachable in her conduct if her father, John of Poitiers, had not been condemned to death in 1524, for having joined in the revolt of the constable de Bourbon, on which occasion she appeared at court, young, beautiful, and interesting in her grief, asking the royal pardon for her father on her knees. The gallant Francis I. raised her, and granted a portion of her prayer, moved, it is said, by a

warmer sentiment than that of commiseration : she did not, however, remain long at court.

After nineteen years of marriage she became a widow, in 1531 ; when, in honour of her husband's memory, she erected a superb mausoleum in the church of Notre Dame de Rouen, and made a vow to wear mourning all her life ; but the merit of this determination is somewhat diminished by the circumstances of her mourning habits having been white, and usually enriched by magnificent jewels. All the poets, whom she patronized, have celebrated her beauty and conjugal attachment.

On returning to the court after the death of the grand seneschal, Diana observed that the young dauphin's education had been much neglected, and proposed to the king to undertake the charge herself. It is astonishing how this lady, who was old enough to be the prince's mother, and who had two daughters of the same age as himself, contrived to captivate the heart of Henry, whose youth was then in the bud, and who appeared to respire but for her until the last moment of his life.

Some contemporary writers, friends of the marvellous, recount that Diana bewitched the dauphin with a mysterious ring which she possessed. No doubt her sorceries consisted in a beauty which braved the hand of time, a majestic figure, jet black hair, which fell in ringlets upon alabaster shoulders, graceful manners, musical tones, and above all the art of retaining the heart which

she had conquered. Brantôme says, “J’ai vu Madame de Valentinois, à l’âge de soixante-sept ans, aussi belle et fraîche que trente ans auparavant, encore qu’elle se fût rompu une jambe sur la pavé d’Orléans en tombant de cheval.”

The ill-will of the duchess d’Etampes, who frequently circulated satirical remarks upon the age and pretensions of Diana, called forth offensive reports from the latter respecting the duchess’s conduct; but these court feuds made no impression on the king or dauphin; and Diana, who was proud of her royal origin, had sufficient influence to marry her eldest daughter to the duke de Bouillon, prince of Sedan, in 1538, and a little later formed an alliance for the second time with the duke d’Aumale, uncle to Henry II.

The beauty of the dauphine, Catherine de Medicis, did not in the least diminish the attachment of Henry II. for his favourite. In her society he lost the unpolished manners which he had contracted in the use of arms and violent exercises; and, notwithstanding Diana lived in the age of chivalry, in which the honour of the female sex was considered as a delicate flower that the least breath of detraction or calumny could wither, the most illustrious families in the kingdom did not hesitate to confide their daughters to her care at court. When elevated to the throne by the death of Francis I.,

Henry II. gave her absolute power to dispense the royal gifts and favours.

The king bestowed the title of duchess de Valentinois upon his favourite ; and in the year 1549, to gratify her extravagant taste, instituted the fine of confirmation—a tax which was paid on election by the new functionaries before entering on the exercise of their duties. These subsidies were devoted to the construction of the sumptuous château d'Anet.

But Diana is reproached with infidelity to Henry notwithstanding all his bounty. She did not even attempt to conceal her attachment for Charles de Cossé-Brissac, of which the king was informed, but who, far from coldly dismissing his ungrateful favourite, then fifty-two years of age, displayed great jealousy, and resolved to exile Brissac. However, to avoid irritating Diana, he appointed him governor of Piedmont, in 1551, and she persuaded him to add to the dignity that of marshal of France. Thus she dispensed gifts and favours according to her will. In conjunction with the constable de Montmorenci, she procured the disgrace of the admiral d'Aunebaut and the cardinal Tournon, both zealous servants of the king. With all her power Diana skilfully managed the queen, whom she treated with great respect ; and Catherine, on her part, assumed an amicable sentiment for the duchess, who, when the

queen was dangerously attacked with the quinsy in Lorraine, attended her with unaffected zeal and tenderness.

But the duchess de Valentinois merits the most severe censure and contempt for her intimacy with the cardinal of Lorraine, at whose solicitation she exerted her influence over Henry II. to induce him to persecute the Protestants (many of whom he ordered to be burned), and to violate the treaty he had entered into with Spain; from which resulted most of the misfortunes that signalized the latter part of his reign, particularly the defeat of Saint Quentin, in 1557, in which the constable Montmorenci and the marshals Chatillon and Saint André were taken prisoners.

The king on more than one occasion excited the jealousy of the duchess. His daughter, Diana d'Angoulême, who was said to resemble him so much, was the child of Phillippa Due, who was born at Montechiaro in 1538, and by her extreme beauty captivated Henry when at Coni, in Piedmont, with the constable Montmorenci. His courtiers set fire to the house in which this young girl resided, and, under favour of the obscurity and tumult, conveyed her to the king's palace. After the birth of her daughter she took the vows, and died in her convent.

Another object of his attachment was a young lady

named Nicol de Savigny, by whom he had a son, Henry de Saint Remi, afterwards gentleman of the chamber to Henry III.

On the occasion of a fête which Catherine de Medicis gave to the king, she composed a ballet, which was to be performed by the dauphine, Mary Stuart; Queen Elizabeth of Spain; Clarissa Strozzi, a relation of Catherine's; Madame Claude of France; and Miss Lewiston (sometimes called "Flamyn"), who was descended from an illustrious Scotch family, and maid of honour to Mary Stuart, and whom Henry greatly admired.

In order to visit this young lady clandestinely, the king was in the habit of enveloping himself in a large sheet, and assuming the appearance of a ghost; but the duchess of Valentinois discovered his trick, and obliged him to send Miss Lewiston out of the kingdom: previous to her departure she gave birth to Henry duke of Angoulême, Grand Prior of France, and admiral and governor of Provence.

The execution of Mary Stuart so sensibly affected Mary Lewiston that she languished and died in 1588.

When Henry II. met his death-blow at the tournament, in which he fought decorated with the colours of his mistress, then nearly sixty years of age, the queen peremptorily ordered Diana to retire to her own hôtel, forbade her to enter the king's chamber, and bluntly

demanded the restoration of some diamonds of the crown which were in her possession.

It was then the duchess de Valentinois's turn to be despoiled of her grandeur and abandoned by her friends. The constable de Montmorenci alone proved grateful to her; and the queen would have wreaked her vengeance on her fallen rival, if the duke d'Aumale by his persuasions had not prevented this affront to the memory of Henry II. She was permitted to retire to the château d'Anet, which she had ornamented in a most scandalous style of luxury and extravagance. To gratify the cardinal of Lorraine she had with equal prodigality erected an immense number of convents, the rumour of which caused the advocate-general, Dumesnil, to demand from her a restitution of seventy-six thousand livres and fifteen hundred crowns, for the succour of the borderers of the Loire, who had been despoiled to that amount by her agents.

Two years after the death of Francis II., which occurred in 1560, Catherine de Medicis, forgetting, in her political views, that the duchess of Valentinois had once possessed the heart of her husband, and thinking that her skill in intrigue would be useful to her, recalled her to court, where Diana willingly seconded her ambitious purposes; but she did not long enjoy the fruits of this reconciliation, having died in 1566. at the age of sixty-

seven, and was buried in the chapel of her château d'Anet.

The portal of this château is preserved at the Musée des Augustins in Paris, as also the tomb of Diana, surmounted by her statue, in which she is represented in a reclining position, surrounded by the attributes of the goddess of the chase. The exquisite workmanship of this monument renders it an invaluable relic.

Of her two daughters by Henry II., one, Diana of France, was married to Horatio Farnese, duke of Castro, and afterwards to François de Montmorenci; the other espoused Claude de Lorraine. Henry II. would have legitimized these two children, but the duchess opposed it, saying, "I was your mistress because I loved you, but I will not suffer an edict to proclaim my weakness."

The all-powerful Catherine, by her moderate treatment of her rival, gained over many of the partisans that the favourite had acquired during her long prosperity; she also conciliated the duke of Montpensier by giving him a wealthy possession, and the prince of La Roche-sur-Yon by appointing his wife her "*dame d'honneur*."

The kingdom was torn by the factions of the princes of the blood, the Guises and the Montmorencis, amongst whom she unceasingly created divisions, always attaching herself to the strongest party, which she invariably

confounded in the end by her intrigues. By these means she was three times regent of France—under Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III. before his return from Poland.

Catherine made choice of the most approved councilors, amongst whom were the cardinal of Lorraine; Montluc, bishop of Valence; Samblancay, archbishop of Bourges; and, above all, the upright and virtuous chancellor de l'Hôpital, whose influence lasted too short a time for the welfare of his country.

The regent was not equally skilful in regard to the Protestants, who attacked her government, and published memoirs, in which she was accused of unlawfully taking part in the administration: the conspiracy of Amboise completely drew upon them the hatred of this arrogant queen, although she was very indifferent to matters of religion, and at one time even affected an attachment for the Protestants, whose discontents she favoured when necessary to her projects; but in contesting the regency they committed an offence which she considered quite unpardonable.

During the short reign of her eldest son, Francis II., who ascended the throne in 1559, and died in 1560, Catherine's power wavered; for the king had married Mary Stuart, niece to the Guises, who were rendered

all-powerful in France in consequence of the affection of Francis II. for his wife.

On the occurrence of his death, Charles IX. succeeded to the throne, and his minority caused a new regency ; to obtain which Catherine offered, as the price of that power, the lives and liberty of the Prince of Condé and the king of Navarre, both of whom were condemned to death in consequence of their conspiracy at Amboise ; and those princes, preferring life and freedom to power, agreed to her proposal : her government was therefore proclaimed by the states assembled at Orleans.

In 1562 the king of Navarre again raised the standard of revolt, in which he was joined by all the Calvinists ; and the queen, alarmed by this rebellion, left Paris for Melun : she also provided other retreats in case of necessity, by conferring the government of Normandy on the Sire of Matignon, and giving one of her daughters to the duke of Savoy, as well as restoring him several places of which he had been deprived by the treaty of Cateau Cambresis.

But these resources were not needed, fortune having declared itself on her side. The king of Navarre was killed at the siege of Rouen, and his party was so much weakened by his loss that Catherine ventured to propose an amnesty to the Protestants, although she entertained a strong resentment against them. The battle

of Dreux, in which the celebrated Marshal Saint André perished, ruined the hopes of the reformers.

The last obstacle to the queen-regent's peaceable enjoyment of her power was the duke de Guise, who was assassinated at Orleans, by Poltrot, in 1563. Catherine, on learning this news, shed tears of joy. She at once dismissed the virtuous l'Hôpital, whose probity was a restraint to her; and, unscrupulous as to the means she employed to gratify her taste for governing, continued to foment divisions between those whose attachment she doubted, and by weakening the state secured her own tranquillity; on the other hand, she loaded her partisans with favours, and augmented their numbers daily.

Although forty-three years of age, she still possessed great beauty, of which it is asserted that she made political use, having accorded her smiles to the vidame of Chartres, the cardinal of Lorraine, the duke de Nemours, the duke de Guise, the prince de Condé, and even to a private gentleman of Brittany named Troile de Mesques.

She also attracted all the nobility to the court by the various diversions that she invented; her maids of honour, the number of whom exceeded two hundred, performed in ballets and theatricals which she composed, and Catherine did not hesitate to make use of their attractions also to serve her political purposes; she corrupted her court and her own children, not even except-

ing Margaret de Valois, whom she frequently conducted to the Place de Grève in Paris, to witness the executions.

Catherine was, however, very industrious : a follower of the school of Alexander VI. and the Borgias, she diligently studied Machiavelism, incessantly corresponded in French and Italian, and added lustre to her diadem by the discerning and generous patronage she bestowed on artists, who have acknowledged their debt of gratitude to her in the eulogies they have handed down to posterity.

This luxurious queen left the palace of Tournelles for that of the Tuileries, which she built, and where she surpassed all the beauties who surrounded her by her majestic air and graceful manners. It was this palace that her superstitious notions induced her to abandon in 1564.

Although gifted with an intellectual mind, Catherine, who had no religious faith, believed in ghosts and spirits : she always wore upon her bosom the skin of an infant whose throat had been cut ; this amulet was covered with mysterious characters of different colours, and she was persuaded that it possessed the virtue of preserving her from all injury. She brought diviners and astrologers with her from Italy, amongst whom was the celebrated Cosmo Ruggieri. This astrologer having predicted that she would die at Saint Germain, she avoided every place

that bore that name ; and as the palace of the Tuileries happened to be situated in a wood near the parish of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, she ordered the erection of the Hôtel de Soissons, near Saint Eustache, where she resided, and to which she adjoined an observatory column, which still exists in the spot of the Halle aux Blés. This column contains a secret staircase, by which the queen ascended with her astrologers to consult the stars and armillary sphere, and to seek in their various positions the perspective of a happiness which the sinful cannot hope to enjoy.

To these faults and weaknesses Catherine joined some great qualities ; she intrepidly assisted at the siege of Rouen in 1562, by encouraging the soldiers in the midst of the fight, heedless of the balls and bullets which flew around her : she afterwards took possession of Havre de Grace, which was occupied by the English, and made a negotiation with Elizabeth of England, by which that powerful queen evacuated the coasts of Normandy, which had been ceded to her by the Protestants during the civil war. At this time all Europe was governed by women—England by Elizabeth ; Scotland by Mary Stuart ; Portugal by the infanta, daughter of Eleonor ; Navarre by queen Jane ; the Low Countries by the natural daughter of Charles Quint ; Spain by Isabella of France ; and France by Catherine de Medicis.

Wishing to deprive the Prince de Condé of his post of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, the queen-regent in 1565 offered to divide the government with her son, Charles IX., then fourteen years of age, and had her project declared by the parliament at Rouen. The irritated Condé again revolted and attempted to seize the king and the queen-mother at Meaux in 1566; but the defeat of the Protestants at Saint Denis, by the constable Montmorenci, strengthened the power of the regent, and gave her the leisure and the means of forming her projects of vengeance.

At Bayonne, consequently, she resolved, in concert with the pope's agents, and Isabella of Spain, assisted by the duke of Alba, to attempt the destruction of the Protestants, and was frequently accompanied in her interviews by the young king of Navarre, to whom she was particularly attached. This prince, who all his life watched over the interests of France, although at the tender age of thirteen, fully understood the nature of these plots, and informed his mother, who warned the prince de Condé and the admiral Coligny; in consequence of which the massacres were adjourned. This youth was afterwards Henry the Great.

Catherine, who imagined that her sanguinary projects would be more easily executed at Paris, unceasingly endeavoured to attract a great number of Protestants

there by warm invitations and brilliant promises : she could not, however, succeed in alluring either Condé or Coligny, who continued the civil war ; she therefore proceeded to the army with her young son, Henry of Anjou, then only sixteen years of age.

In 1567, on the fête of Saint Denis, Catherine's redoubtable enemy, the constable de Montmorenci, was killed ; and in 1569, the battle of Jarnac, in which Condé was slain, and of Montcontour, in which Catherine had the satisfaction of seeing her son Henry the first captain in Europe, crushed the Protestants without destroying their hopes, and, although there was much carnage, did not shake the frightful resolution the queen-mother had formed of subjecting them to a more complete massacre.

Hitherto it had been difficult to attract a great number of Protestants to Paris ; it was necessary to inspire them with confidence. Catherine undertook the task, and, urged by the cardinal of Lorraine, and seconded by her son, Charles IX., she employed the immense resources of her talent in seduction and perfidy.

She invited the queen of Navarre and Admiral Coligny to the capital, but both had the prudence to refuse ; she then sent Biron with a proposal of marriage between her own daughter, Margaret de Valois, and the queen of Navarre's young son, Henry, prince of Béarn. After some hesitation, this apparently frank and cordial offer

was accepted, and they arrived at Blois, where they were welcomed by the king and the queen-mother.

The court assembled at Paris to make preparations for the marriage, and Jane d'Albret, queen of Navarre, was so disgusted at the corrupt manners of the inmates of the royal dwelling, that she was desirous of flying from it, but was prevented by her death, she having been poisoned by Catherine's perfumer! In reading the history of this queen, the imagination is dismayed at the diabolical arts by which so many illustrious persons fell, to serve the purposes and fortune of the ambitious daughter of Medicis. Neither this event, nor a thousand other secret indications, seemed to awaken the suspicions of the Protestants, for this deceitful queen calmly prepared garlands, fêtes, and ballets with all the appearance of sincerity! like the ancients, who decorated their victims with flowers, and conducted them to the sacrifice in the midst of music and the dance.

The most sanguinary page in the annals of France is offered to the memory in the massacres of Saint Bartholomew, which took place on the 24th of August, 1572, and were resolved on and arranged in the Tuileries by Catherine and the dukes of Anjou, Nevers, and Angoulême. Admiral Coligny was to be the first victim, and the general massacre was to follow. All was determined with a frightful secrecy: the barriers of Paris

were locked and guarded, and the signal was the clock of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois. Sad and anxious, Charles IX. waited in secret horror for the hour of the massacre. His mother, fearing his irresolution, passed the night beside him, reassured him, and prevented him from countermanding his order; to hasten the performance of which, she caused the tocsin to be sounded before the arrival of the hour.

Coligny's house was forced; the assassins rushed upon him, regardless of his white hairs, and despatched him with many blows, after which they threw his body out of the window; then followed the screams of the dying and the shouts of the murderers. None were spared; the streets and squares were strewn with the corpses of the old and young of both sexes, who had been assassinated in their beds and thrown from their windows. When morning arose to enlighten this frightful scene of tragedy, blood ran through the streets, and dyed the borders of the river. "*Les corps détranchés tombaient des fenêtres, les portes-cochères étaient bouchées de corps achevés ou languissants, et les rues de cadavres qu'on traînait sur le pavé à la rivière.*"

The king of Navarre's gentlemen were killed in the Louvre, and the infamous Charles IX., grown ferocious at the sight of blood, armed with a carbine, and standing on the meridional balcony of the Louvre, fired on the

unhappy Protestants who endeavoured to swim across the Seine. The carnage lasted three days, after which the queen left her palace to contemplate this work of her revenge, accompanied by her children and her maids of honour. Orders for the same scenes of execution were sent to all the provinces in France, and sixty thousand inhabitants fell to satisfy the bloodthirsty Catherine. History affords the names of those governors who rejected her mission with horror; they were Messieurs de Tendy, de Charny, de Saint-Heran, Tannequy-le-Veneur, de Gordes, de Mandelot, and d'Orthes.

An Italian cut off the head of Coligny, and offered it to Catherine, who, after attentively examining it for some time, ordered that sad trophy of her cruelty to be embalmed, and sent to Rome to Pope Gregory XIII., who dared to blaspheme Heaven by publicly returning thanks for the massacre.

After this period the queen-mother plunged into every species of depravity, infected France with all the vices of Italy, and favoured and encouraged the disorderly conduct of her sons, in order to deprive them of the energy requisite for governing. She instituted, among other diversions, battles between beasts, and accompanied her children to witness the tortures and executions of the condemned; after which she gave them feasts,

in which her maids of honour, crowned with flowers, and habited as goddesses, served the young princes at table.

Charles IX.'s disposition, after the massacres of Saint Bartholomew, became sad and melancholy; he was constantly filled with terror; and, struck with a mortal malady in the flower of his age, he experienced but indifference and neglect from most of his relations. He believed himself to be surrounded with spectres, had frightful dreams, in which his terrified imagination beheld rivers of blood and heaps of ghastly corpses, and fancied that the air was constantly filled with doleful sounds and plaintive accents. He sighed continually, and had an insupportable weight of grief at his heart; remorse doubtless abridged his days, which renders him at least worthy of compassion, for he was sensible of his crimes and dreaded the Divine anger, whereas the real author and instigator of the massacre never displayed the least sign of repentance; indeed, Catherine is said to have declared that she had only six of the murders of that eventful night upon her conscience; which, if the statement is correct, bespeaks a most frightful security! When dying, Charles IX. repulsed his mother with horror, and fell into convulsions whenever she attempted to approach him.

The queen-mother experienced little grief at the loss of this son, having always a preference for the duke of

Anjou ; some chronicles state that Louis XIII. often repeated that Charles IX. was poisoned by Catherine de Medicis. This queen saw with pleasure the continuation of her authority, until Henry III., who was elected king of Poland in 1573, returned to France and assumed the reins of government in 1574. But this prince was no longer the valiant conqueror of Jarnac and Montcontour, having grown indolent, and his ambitious mother encouraged this disposition.

In 1575 Henry III. married Louise of Lorraine, niece to the duke de Guise ; and Catherine, fearing that the young queen's uncle would obtain too much influence over the king, created a division between the royal pair. Accordingly, the indignant Protestants again revolted ; but the queen-mother arrested the king of Navarre and the marshals Montmorenci and de Cossé, who headed them, but the king rendered them their liberty in 1576, and granted them places of security. Catherine consoled herself by prevailing on the pope to excommunicate the king of Navarre in 1585.

This queen's astrologers had foretold that her four sons would be kings, and she made every effort to procure a foreign crown for the fourth, who was Duke d'Alençon, for she loved Henry III. too much to wish that the fourth prince should succeed to the throne through his death. She therefore despatched Monsieur

de Noailles to obtain the regency of Algiers for him from the sultan, Selim II., with the view of composing a kingdom for that prince by the addition of the island of Sardinia. This ambitious woman also despatched a fleet in 1580 to maintain her pretensions to the crown of Portugal, but in that enterprise she failed.

The formation of the league in 1585 augmented her power, but threw France into the most terrible disorder; the duke de Guise placed himself at the head of the revolt, and plunged the nation into an abyss of trouble, which the accession of Henry the Great alone put an end to.

After the celebrated "day of barricades," in 1588, the king, who was defeated by the league and obliged to quit Paris, at length discerned the source of all the evil; he, therefore, forbid his mother's appearance in the council, and loaded her with bitter reproaches. The rage to which Catherine gave vent in consequence brought on a violent fever, of which she died at Blois, in 1589, aged seventy years. This queen deservedly carried to the tomb the execration of the people.

Her children were—besides Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III.—Louis, Victoria, and Jane, who died in their infancy; Francis duke d'Alençon and Brabant; Elizabeth, wife of Philip II., king of Spain; Claude, married to Charles II., duke de Lorraine; and Margaret de Valois, first wife of Henry the Great.

In consequence of there being no materials at Blois necessary for the process of embalming, Catherine's remains were soon decomposed; her body was, therefore, transferred without pomp to the church of Saint Sauveur at Blois, where she was obliged to be buried in the night. In 1609 (twenty-one years after her burial) her coffin was transported to Saint Denis, and placed in the mausoleum which she erected for her husband and herself.

Châteaubriand, in his remarks on this queen, says, "Catherine was an Italian, and educated in a republican principality; she was accustomed to popular storms, factions, intrigues, secret poisonings, and midnight murders; she had no aristocratic and monarchical prejudices—that haughtiness towards the great and contempt for the little, those pretensions to divine right and monopoly of absolute power; she was unacquainted with our laws, and had little respect for them; for she attempted to place the crown of France upon the head of her daughter. Like the Italians of her time she was superstitious, but incredulous in her religious opinions and in her unbelief; had no real aversion to the Protestants, but sacrificed them for political reasons. In fact, if we trace all her actions, we shall perceive that she looked upon this vast kingdom, of which she was the sovereign, as an enlarged Florence; and considered the riots of her little republic, the quarrels of the Pozzi and the Medicis, as the struggles of the Guises and Chatillons."

As the mother of kings, the guardian of her children, and the regent of the kingdom, Catherine's character is a problem difficult to solve. She was more circumspect than enterprising, and supplied the want of a vigorous chief by the craftiness and cunning of her sex and country; she neither did wrong for the pleasure of committing evil, nor good from a natural principle of virtue, for her merits and vices depended mostly on moments and circumstances. In reflecting on the annals of empires, how frequently the destinies of thousands depend upon the lightest incidents! At the insurrection of Florence, in 1528, Catherine de Medicis several times narrowly escaped death. The rebels, having seized her, conveyed her to a convent: one of them proposed to suspend her from the walls, exposed to the fire of the artillery, and another wished to give her up to the brutality of the soldiers; but she escaped all these dangers, in order to burden France with trouble for the space of fifty-six years!

Nevertheless, her love for the arts does her honour. Besides the Tuileries and the Hôtel de Soissons which she built at Paris, she erected the beautiful château de Chenonceaux in Touraine; she also enriched the royal library of Paris with a great number of Greek and Latin manuscripts, and with a portion of the books which her great-grandfather, Laurent de Medicis, purchased from the Turks after the taking of Constantinople.

QUEEN MARY STUART.

(Reign of Francis II.)

ALLIED to the houses of Bourbon and Medicis, niece of Henry VIII., king of England, and daughter of James V. of Scotland and of Mary de Lorraine-Guise, Mary Stuart, who is celebrated in the annals of three kingdoms, and has occupied the world with her romantic life and tragical death, was born in the castle of Linlithgow in Edinburgh, in the year 1542. A week after her birth, the death of her father raised her to the throne under the guardianship of her mother, and she was crowned at the age of nine months, at Stirling, by the Cardinal Beaton, archbishop of Saint-Andrew's.

The hand of the young queen of Scotland was sought by both England and France. Henry VIII. was desirous of marrying Mary to his son Edward, in order to unite the two kingdoms; and Henry II. made every effort to preserve an alliance with a country that had always powerfully assisted the French in their struggles with the English. The count of Arran, regent of Scotland, destined Mary for his son; but, when the count de Montgomeri was sent to that country to oppose the incursions of the English who were ravaging their borders, the nobles, to testify their gratitude, accorded the hand of their young queen to Francis II., dauphin

of France, and thus, through the skilful negotiations of the cardinal de Lorraine and the duke de Guise, England lost this rich possession.

In the mean time, Mary was educated in a convent in the middle of the lake of Monteith, with four companions, all of whom bore the name of Mary; and the queen-mother, seeing her daughter safely surrounded by a corps of Henry II.'s troops, publicly declared that the queen of Scotland was affianced to the dauphin of France.

In order to transport her safely to France, a fleet waited near the coast, and she was placed under the charge of the count de Brézé, who with a military escort conducted her from Dumbarton Castle on board of a French galley stationed at the mouth of the Clyde. She was accompanied by her natural brother, James Stuart, William Lewiston, John Airskins, and her four female companions and namesakes. After much manœuvring to avoid the English fleet who pursued her, Mary landed at Brest, and proceeded by short journeys to Saint Germain, where her health and education were equally attended to. At the age of six years, her beauty and sweetness of disposition rendered her the idol of the court. Her form and movements were strikingly elegant, her features regular, her eyes and hair deep brown, and her complexion a dazzling white. There was a charm in all her words and actions, which drew this

remark from Catherine de Medicis :—"Notre petite reinette Ecossaise n'a qu'à sourire pour tourner toutes ces têtes Françaises."

Mary possessed an astonishing facility for acquiring languages, having at the age of fourteen spoken six with fluency ; her imagination was brilliant, and in the presence of Henry II., Catherine de Medicis, and the court, she delivered with her natural eloquence an address in Latin, which she had herself composed, and in which she maintained that it was the duty of all women to cultivate the belles-lettres. In 1550 she nearly fell a victim to poison, which was administered to her by one of the king's archers of the Scotch guard.

In 1558, the dauphin, who was sincerely attached to his fiancée, entreated the king to suffer their union to take place, and, as there were no opposing obstacles, the marriage ceremony was performed at Notre Dame de Paris, on a theatre expressly erected in front of the church-door. After the celebration of the union, the Scotch ambassadors presented Mary with her sceptre and crown, and she was styled the queen-dauphine.

England regarded with jealousy the advantages France possessed by this marriage. Scotland had become a prey to religious factions, and groaned under the violence of the agents sent by France to introduce the Catholic faith ; and Mary, who entertained great

repugnance for the excesses committed in her name, became odious to her subjects.

At the death of Mary queen of England, the queen-dauphine, who was niece to Henry VIII., assumed the title of Queen of England, to the exclusion of Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, whom the Catholics considered illegitimate. The dauphin, who became king in 1559, died in 1560; and Mary, who had borne the title of queen of three kingdoms, felt herself despoiled of all save the name, for Elizabeth's skilful conduct rendered any attempt at supplanting her useless.

Mary would gladly have remained in France, content to be queen-dowager of that kingdom only, for she felt that she could not live so happily in her own wild and less polished country; but the politic and suspicious Catherine de Medicis opposed her wishes, fearing that, if her son, Charles IX., married her, she would govern the empire of France in the king's name.

Mary was deeply affected at the loss of her young husband, and would frequently sing elegies which she composed, and accompany herself on the lute :—

“ Si je suis en repos,
Someillant sur ma couche,
J'oy qu'il me tient propos,
Je le sens qui me touche :
En labeur, en reeoy,
Toujours est près de moi.”

She at first retired to her uncle, the cardinal de Lorraine, at Rheims, where she received a summons from Elizabeth to renounce the title of queen of England and Ireland, which she refused to do; and, finding herself but indifferently supported by her uncle in her projects of remaining in France, embarked at Calais in 1561.

On her departure she addressed most affecting adieux to the hospitable land that had sheltered her childhood. Leaning against the poop of the vessel, with her eyes fixed upon the coast, she burst into tears when the land grew distant, and remained five hours in the same attitude, constantly repeating “Adieu, France! adieu, France!” When night came, she refused to descend to the cabin; a carpet was spread on the deck where she lay, but she could not be prevailed on to take any nourishment. She desired the helmsman to awaken her at the first glimmer of daylight, that she might catch one more glimpse of the French soil; and when the break of day permitted her a last look at her cherished France, she saluted it with these words:—“Adieu la France! adieu donc, ma très chère France! cela est fait; adieu la France! je pense ne vous voir jamais plus.” Another exile, who recently sought shelter in Mary Stuart’s deserted palace of Holyrood, might have pronounced the same words. The verses in which Mary expressed her regrets are well known:—

“ Adieu ! plaisant pays de France ;
O ma patrie,
La plus chérie,
Qui as nourri ma jeune enfance.
Adieu, France ! adieu, mes beaux jours ! ”

Some historians assert that her grief was increased by the circumstance of her being attached to the constable Montmorenci, but this is doubtful ; her heart was more probably full of the image of her lost husband, whose remains reposed in that land of her love. But if it had been the case, and the constable had been free to have united his hand to that of this queen, he would probably have governed Scotland wisely. Mary's name would be free from the stain of blood, and Elizabeth's from the crime of regicide.

Mary's pretensions to the throne of England drew on her the hatred of Elizabeth, who, informed of her return to Scotland by the earl of Murray, sent out several vessels to arrest her rival ; she however escaped, under favour of a thick fog, and after five days' sail disembarked at Leith, and made her entry into Edinburgh. She found the country in confusion on account of the religious differences ; the Catholic faith was proscribed, and her chaplain's life attempted ; the people, excited by her natural brother the earl of Murray, proclaimed that they had an idolatrous queen, and displayed many proofs of hatred towards her.

Mary requested Elizabeth to acknowledge her as heir to the throne of England—a demand which was not unreasonable, as she was obliged afterwards to admit the same rights in the person of her son, James VI. It has been said that one of the conditions upon which this acknowledgment was to be granted was Mary's marriage with the earl of Leicester, to whom Elizabeth was attached, and which proposal was doubtless a ruse of the queen of England's to prevent other alliances, which were offered to the queen of Scotland from all sides, especially by the Archduke Charles of Austria, son of Ferdinand I., and Don Carlos, son of Philip II. of Spain.

Although Mary hardly escaped being seized by the English vessels, the two queens were at first very amicable, and even exchanged presents. In 1564 Mary sent Elizabeth a superb diamond, accompanied by a letter written in Latin, which both these queens were well versed in; and the queen of Scotland was the dupe of the queen of England's deceitful demonstrations of friendship, which, however, did not last long. Mary encouraged the Catholics in England; Elizabeth excited the Protestant faction in Scotland: thus religious differences produced dissensions between these two queens, who governed in the same island.

Instead of contracting an alliance with a prince who

could have sustained and protected her against the ambition and jealousy of Elizabeth, Mary married, in 1565, her cousin Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, a young man nineteen years of age, grandson of Henry VIII., and, like Mary, a Catholic and aspirant to the throne of England. Mary's natural brother, the earl of Murray, stirred up the discontented, but the queen took up arms and dispersed the rebels, after which she bestowed the title of king upon her husband.

Shortly after, her enemies persuaded Darnley that the queen entertained an affection for David Rizzio, a Piedmontese, belonging to the suite of the ambassador of Savoy, whose talents she admired, but who was ugly and deformed: she accorded him her confidence in the administration of the state, appointed him to the office of private secretary, and admitted him at her table. One evening when supping at Holyrood with the earl of Argyle, her natural sister, and Rizzio, Darnley precipitately entered the room, accompanied by the lords Ruthven, Douglas, and others, and declared that he had come to take the life of Rizzio: the unfortunate Italian threw himself at his mistress's feet, and implored her protection. In vain the queen employed entreaties and menaces; while clinging to her robes, and endeavouring to shelter himself near her person, he was despatched at the feet of his sovereign with repeated blows of the poniard, in

1566. Mary, who was at the time pregnant, experienced so much alarm at this horrible spectacle, that the impression is said to have been communicated to her child, James VI. of Scotland, and I. of England, who could never look upon an unsheathed sword without terror.

At the sight of Rizzio's bleeding corpse, Mary, who was overpowered with indignation, exclaimed, "I will not deplore, but I will avenge him." She caused his body to be buried in the tomb of the kings of Scotland, which created great indignation.

Henry Stuart, who was attacked with indisposition at the residence of his father in Glasgow, was persuaded by the queen to remove to a house belonging to the collegiate provost of St. Mary, where he perished, and the tragedy is imputed to Mary, who is considered by some to have acquiesced in the murder of her husband for the purpose of marrying her lover, the earl of Bothwell. Letters were afterwards produced which were declared to have been addressed by the queen to Bothwell, in which she accedes to his project of assassination.

The unfortunate prince and his domestics were strangled in their beds, and the house blown up with gunpowder. The same histories state that Mary, instead of enclosing herself for forty days, appeared in public immediately after her husband's murder, and in a short

time married the assassin Bothwell, whom she created duke of Orkney.

In consequence of this criminal conduct, or rather the belief in it, the people revolted, and Mary was besieged in the castle of Borthwick, where, abandoned by her cowardly husband, she fell into the power of the insurgents, who conducted her to Edinburgh, all the way displaying to her view a banner on which was painted a representation of Darnley's corpse.

Confined in Lochleven Castle, under the care of Lady Murray, mother of the brutal earl, Mary was forced to sign her abdication and the earl of Murray's regency. She contrived to escape from her captivity through the assistance of a youth (William Douglas) sixteen years of age. At Hamilton she found a small army of six thousand men, but, attacked by superior forces, she was defeated at Langside.

Having no vessel to convey her to France, Mary proceeded to England by the Gulf of Solway, and entreated the assistance which Elizabeth had so often insidiously offered. Elizabeth replied that she would accord her protection when she had justified herself of the crimes imputed to her. At the same time the Earl of Lennox demanded justice for the murder of his son Darnley, and Murray sent the queen of England a case of papers consisting of correspondence purporting to be the letters

of the queen of Scotland to Bothwell. This nobleman when dying publicly declared that Mary had no hand whatever in the murder of Darnley.

The third period of Mary's life begins with her introduction to England, and, supposing her to have been guilty of the crimes imputed to her, the treatment she received there is sufficient to efface all recollection of them. The narrow-minded Elizabeth, mistress of her rival, nourished such violent sentiments of envy that she could not endure to hear her name pronounced; forgetting the claims of misfortune and the rights of hospitality, she arrogated to herself the power of arresting the queen of Scotland, and issued orders for her trial.

The unhappy victim found a friend in the duke of Norfolk, who protected her in her captivity, and would have married her; he even formed a party for her in London, but his head paid the price of his temerity. Philip II., king of Spain, in conjunction with Pope Pius V., also prepared to invade England on her account; but these attempts proved misfortunes for Mary, who was more closely confined, and, in addition to the other crimes laid to her charge, was accused of conspiracy.

The extreme loveliness of Mary Stuart had always, as has been stated by her partisans, grieved the heart of Elizabeth, who, they assert, had no pretensions to

physical advantages of any kind ; and she is represented as so revengeful as not to be satisfied until her rival's beautiful head should roll on the scaffold. It is insinuated that, if Mary *did really* plot in her prison, the snare was purposely laid for her. There are, however, good reasons for believing that her superiority of talents and charms cost her her life. Ballard and Babington, two enthusiastic Catholics, resolved to assassinate Elizabeth, by which Mary would have succeeded to the throne. The correspondence of those conspirators was seized by Elizabeth's spies, and another accusation was added to the list.

Elizabeth thought proper to prolong the captivity of the queen of Scotland for the space of nineteen years ; she unceasingly overwhelmed her with humiliations, and, to aggravate the weight of her misery, several times held out to her the sweet hope of liberty. She was repeatedly transferred from one prison to another, but the place of conference was Westminster, and the queen of England paid the chief accuser, Murray, five thousand pounds to encourage his zeal. Elizabeth also excited James VI. to persecute his mother ; and by her orders the governor of the prison to whose charge Mary was confided, Sir Amias Paulet, had a Catholic priest executed in front of her window for having displayed some interest for his unhappy sovereign.

In vain Mary offered to renounce all claim to the crown of England, in order to obtain her liberty ; in vain the ambassadors of her brother-in-law, Henry III., the president de Bellière, Messieurs Fénelon, de Mauvissière, and de Châteauneuf, pleaded her cause with energy,—they were not heard. Elizabeth appointed a commission to try her on accusations threatening her life ; she was found guilty and condemned to death, and the earls of Kent and Shrewsbury were sent to present the queen of Scotland the warrant for her execution.

Mary employed her last days in consoling her attendants, among whom she distributed her trinkets, and wrote to the king of France and Catherine de Medicis ; she also wrote her confession, because she was not allowed a chaplain,—a favour usually accorded to the vilest of criminals.

The evening before her death, after supper, she drank to the health and welfare of all her devoted attendants, and requested them to pledge her : obedient to her wish, they all knelt around her, and mingling their tears with their wine, drank to their mistress. She afterwards spent some time in devotion, and then sought repose, in order, as she said, to preserve her strength, that she might act with the dignity becoming a Christian and a queen.

At the break of day Mary arose and dressed herself

with extraordinary care, in a robe of black velvet, which she reserved for the purpose of her execution; after which she prayed, and communicated with her own hands the sacred wafer, which had been consecrated and sent to her by the sovereign pontiff, Pius V. She requested her female attendants to assist her in her last moments, and, leaning on the arm of her faithful servant, Lord Melvil, firmly ascended the scaffold, which was erected at Fotheringhay Castle. Till the last moment the earl of Kent reproached her with her superstition, and insulted the crucifix which she held in her hand. Her women took off her veil and ornaments; and when the executioner stepped forward to remove the collar from her neck, she gently repulsed him, saying that she was unaccustomed to be waited on by such attendants. When she declared herself prepared, he knelt and asked her pardon, which she accorded to him, as well as to all the authors of her death; and then, looking at the axe, she expressed her regret at not having her head taken off by a French sword. Mary then protested her innocence, embraced her friends with serious composure, had her eyes bandaged, during which she recited a Latin psalm aloud, and then laid her head upon the block. The executioner was so unskilful that he drove a part of the queen's headdress into her skull, and her head was not severed from her body until the

third stroke ; the headsman then held up, at the four corners of the scaffold, a head that had worn two crowns, as he would have exposed that of the most execrable villain.

Such was the tragical end of the beautiful Queen of Scots, in whose attachment to the religion of her birth, in whose rights to the throne of England, and in whose talents and beauty, consisted, according to some historians, all her crimes. The sweetness of her disposition, the graces of her mind, the protection with which she honoured letters, the success with which she cultivated them, her firmness in misfortunes, and her attachment for the religion of her fathers, have rendered her memory dear to all impartial persons, and especially to the Catholics, who consider her as having been a martyr to her religious principles.

She was executed at the age of forty-four, in 1587, and had passed the half of her days in captivity. Her destruction, whatever may have been her offences, moral or political, indelibly stains the character of the famous Queen Elizabeth.

After recounting the circumstances, and especially the crimes, attached to this queen's memory by the generality of historians, it would be doing her an injustice to omit remarking that there are records in her favour, which are equally entitled to consideration. Even in

the year of her death a work was published entitled "Martyrdom of the Queen of Scotland, Dowager of France, containing a correct Dissertation on the perfidy done her at the instigation of Elizabeth, by which the calumnies and false accusations instituted against that most virtuous and illustrious princess are exposed, and her innocence substantiated." (*Edinburgh*: 2 vols. 8vo.) As the circumstances therein mentioned were of recent occurrence, and it would have been hardly possible to advance false statements at that time with impunity, this work merits some confidence. Also in a volume entitled "Historical and Critical Researches on the principal Proofs of the Accusations brought against Mary Stuart, with an accurate examination into the Histories of Dr. Robertson and Mr. Hume," the truth of this queen's history is disputed with force and discrimination. This work was translated into the French language by Edme, in 1772. The author of these researches says that the correspondence attributed to her, as it exists at present in a work of Buchanan's, and believed to be original, is proved beyond doubt to be apocryphal. He represents the accusers of the queen as having been themselves the authors of the crime which they imputed to their sovereign, and of having formed an association and sold themselves to Elizabeth; that the earl of Murray, urged by ambition and the promise

of Elizabeth's assistance, placed himself at the head of an insurrection for the purpose of killing Darnley, and taking possession of the queen's person; that he was constantly conspiring until the death of Darnley, which was his own act and that of his associates, Bothwell amongst others; that, in going to Stirling Castle to visit her son, Mary was arrested by eight hundred cavaliers, with Bothwell at their head, and compelled by a threat of imprisonment to give her hand to that nobleman, who was afterwards publicly proclaimed the murderer of Henry Stuart, and the queen his accomplice; by which apparent criminality of its sovereign the whole of Scotland rebelled.

Such are the facts amply detailed in the "Researches" relative to Mary Stuart, which, if they may be credited (and the author is supported by extracts which it appears unreasonable to oppose), throw a new light on the history of this unfortunate princess, and offer the most natural explanation of apparent inconsistencies in her character. One circumstance, at least, in her favour, is the frankness of Camden, who, although the friend of Elizabeth, and protected by her, as also a zealous partisan of the Reformed Church, not only refused to calumniate the queen of Scotland, but candidly absolved her from all crime.

After her execution, Mary's corpse was embalmed by

order of the sheriff of Northampton, and interred in the cathedral of Peterborough, near the tomb of queen Catherine of Arragon. In 1612 James I. transferred his mother's remains to the royal sepulchre at Westminster.

Henry III. caused a magnificent funeral procession to take place in Paris in honour of Mary Stuart, whom he could neither defend or avenge ; and that was another weakness resulting from the disastrous policy of Catherine de Medicis.

QUEEN ELIZABETH OF AUSTRIA.

(Reign of Charles IX.)

ELIZABETH was daughter of the emperor Maximilian II., and of Mary of Austria, granddaughter of Charles Quint, and was born in 1554.

The negotiations for her marriage with Charles IX. were prolonged for nine years, during which time Philip II. of Spain made many attempts to prevent this alliance of France and Germany, but the politic Catherine de Medicis and the archbishop of Rheims triumphed over all these obstacles.

Villeroi, the secretary of state, was sent to Spain to

redeem the clauses in the contract of the marriage, and Albert de Gondi, marshal de Retz, solemnly espoused Elizabeth in the name of his sovereign, Charles IX., in the year 1570. The elector of Mayence, who pronounced the nuptial benediction, was charged, in conjunction with three other dignitaries, to conduct the queen to France.

Notwithstanding the calamities with which the kingdom was afflicted, brilliant preparations were made for Elizabeth's reception. The king and the queen-mother met her at Mezières, the old fortress of which had been converted into an enchanting residence by the care and inventive genius of Catherine. Elizabeth entered Mezières in a carriage drawn by four white horses decorated with rich housings, and was saluted by a discharge of musketry and with military music. In the same triumphant manner she passed all through France, receiving pompous entertainment at every town, and in 1571 was crowned and made her solemn entry into Paris.

At the period of their marriage Charles IX. was twenty years of age and Elizabeth sixteen; she joined to great physical advantages an amiable disposition and solid piety. Educated by virtuous parents in the principles of the most rigid morality, Elizabeth found herself isolated in the corrupt and infamous court of her husband and the queen-mother, "*Bien est vrai, quand elle était dans de lit à part, ou en cachette, ses rideaux très-bien*

tirés, elle se tenait toute à genoux, et priant Dieu, battant sa poitrine.”

Catherine de Medicis considered her daughter-in-law too virtuous to communicate her intrigues or plots to her; and Charles, who honoured those merits in his wife which he did not possess himself, so carefully concealed the events of the night of St. Bartholomew, that the young queen was ignorant of the murderous act until awakened by the noise. On learning the dreadful cause of the confusion, she hastily inquired if the king was aware of it; and when informed that Charles IX. had ordered and assisted in the massacres, Elizabeth burst into tears, and, throwing herself on her knees, implored Divine pity and forgiveness for the author of this dreadful crime.

This queen took no part in the affairs of government, but secretly lamented the misfortunes and disorders of the state, under the administration of a prince whom she endeavoured to please, although acquainted with his attachment to another. She passed her time in writing memoirs on the history of the epoch, and in composing religious poetry. Bassompierre says that her writings were very curious, and it is a subject of much regret that they were suppressed. Elizabeth also spent much time in devotion, spoke little, and always in Spanish.

She was deeply grieved at the depravity of the women

who surrounded her, and especially her sister-in-law Margaret de Valois, but was never heard to utter a jealous reproach against Charles for his infidelity, feeling, no doubt, that such conduct would not remedy the evil. Before his marriage the king had formed an attachment for Helena Bon de Mes-guillon, daughter of the governor of Marseilles, and wife of Charles de Gondi de la Tour, grand master of the wardrobe, who, urged by jealousy, endeavoured to poison the king, but was prevented by his wife. It is said that Madame de Gondi, to revenge this attempt, retaliated in the same manner upon her husband, and with success. Nevertheless, after the massacres of St. Bartholomew, in which Madame de Gondi lost a near relation, she coldly replied to the king's letters: when sought by him in person she was seized with an involuntary terror, which she could not repress at the sight of him; and to avoid his attentions retired to the convent of St. Magloire, where she obtained absolution from her brother-in-law, Peter de Gondi, archbishop of Paris.

Charles afterwards attached himself to Marie Touchet, daughter of a judge of Orleans and of Marie Mathy. She was born at Gien in 1549, and received a brilliant education from her father, who was exceedingly clever. To the charms of agreeable conversation she added those of person, and nothing could more exactly describe

her than the anagram of her name, Marie Touchet: "*ie charme tout.*"

At the period when Charles IX. first beheld Marie the court resided at Blois, so that the near neighbourhood of Orleans, and the king's numerous hunting excursions, afforded him many opportunities of seeing the young Orléannaise. For some time he magnanimously stifled his passion, but, not finding in the object of it an equally disinterested auxiliary, he abandoned himself to its power, and Marie responded, or feigned to respond, to his attachment.

Charles first appointed her maid of honour to his sister Margaret de Valois, who professed great friendship for her. When the picture of his wife, Queen Elizabeth of Austria, was sent to the king, Marie, after attentively examining it, joyfully exclaimed "*L'Allemande ne me fait pas peur.*"

Marie is accused of having formed a *liaison* with Monsieur de Montluc, brother of the archbishop of Valence, of which the king was informed; accordingly, when at supper, Charles took the reticule of his favourite, under pretext of admiring the tissue, and discovered in it a billet which she had received from that gentleman. Marie immediately threw herself at the king's feet, and succeeded in obtaining his pardon. Charles IX.'s affection for Marie Touchet never ceased but with his life,

and in his last moments he charged Monsieur de la Tour to recommend her to the protection of the queen-mother.

She was twenty-five years of age when his death occurred, but the event did not change her position at court, for she had been bountifully enriched by Charles, and the indifference she had always manifested for state affairs had gained her the attachment of Catherine de Medicis, who beheld her there without suspicion.

At the death of his wife, Jacqueline de Rohan, the lord of Balzac d'Entraigues married Marie Touchet, in 1578, and had two daughters by her, Henrietta, marquise de Verneuil, and Marie, who lived for ten years with the marshal de Bassompierre.

After her marriage Madame d'Entraigues became strict in her principles of morality, having, it is said, killed with her own hands one of her pages who attempted some liberties with her youngest daughter; nevertheless, she and her husband suffered the eldest to become the mistress of Henry IV. for a promise of marriage upon certain conditions, and the sum of one hundred thousand crowns.

In 1610, the death of Henry IV. having deprived her family of all influence at court, Madame d'Entraigues devoted herself to retirement. Possessed of an extensive library, of which Plutarch was her favourite author, she passed the remainder of her life in those studies

which formed the charm of her solitude, and peaceably terminated her long career, at the age of eighty-nine, in the year 1638. She was buried in the convent of the Minimes in the Place Royale at Paris. Madame d'Entraigues had two children by Charles IX., one of whom died young; the other was Charles de Valois, grand prior of France, count d'Auvergne, and duke of Angoulême.

Although the good queen Elizabeth did not resent this attachment of Charles, she avoided associating with the favourite, as well as the court in general; she opposed gentleness to his violence, and the king avowed that he was unworthy of so virtuous a wife. When, struck by the avenging hand of Providence, he expiated his crimes by a frightful disease and the stings of remorse, Elizabeth sought, on her knees, by the death-bed of her husband, to appease, by sincere prayers, the Divine displeasure; and the expiring king recommended his wife to the protection of his successor and the king of Navarre.

On becoming a widow, in 1574, the queen left the court for the château of Amboise, where her daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was being educated. After a short visit to this residence, she quitted France in 1575, and proceeded to Vienna, the court of her brother Rodolphe, emperor of Germany; it was in that city that she founded the monastery of Saint Claire, where she afterwards re-

sided, and formed, until her death, a model of all the virtues.

Elizabeth possessed the provinces of Berri, Bourbon, Forez, and la Marche, which she governed wisely ; she would not suffer the magistracies to be sold, but charged her agent in France, Monsieur Busbecq, to select the most eligible persons for the office. Her revenues were devoted to acts of utility and charity ; each year she generously endowed a certain number of young ladies who were without fortune ; and erected an establishment for those to retire to who had formed dishonourable attachments.

Her sister-in-law, Margaret de Valois, who was detained at the château d'Usson in a state of restriction bordering on indigence, by the severity of her offended husband, Henry IV., owed many benefits to her generosity. Elizabeth shared her fortune with Margaret, who, though she had lived a life of immorality and depravity, was sensible of the worth and merits of that queen, to whom she was most grateful, and whose death so deeply affected her, that her grief carried her to the borders of the tomb.

Elizabeth was perseveringly asked in marriage by Philip II., king of Spain, and her brother-in-law, Henry III. of France ; but she refused a second marriage, and died, at the age of thirty-eight, in the convent of Saint Clare in Vienna, where she was buried in 1592.

QUEEN LOUISA OF LORRAINE.

(Reign of Henry III.)

HENRY III., who was one of the most capricious of princes, was, when duke of Anjou, affianced first to Catherine of Navarre, sister of Henry IV., and afterwards to Anne, daughter of the king of Poland, whom he succeeded to that throne. The first marriage was broken off by Catherine de Medicis, as it did not accord with her political views; Anne's extreme ugliness caused the rupture of the second by the prince himself, who sighed for the hand of the beautiful Elizabeth, sister to the king of Sweden, but the difference of their religion placed an obstacle to that union, and Henry next declared the princess of Condé the only woman worth loving.

Brantôme says that Mary de Cleves, princess of Condé, and her two sisters, the duchesses of Nevers and Guise, all daughters of Francis de Cleves and Margaret de Bourbon Vendôme, were surnamed the three Graces. The young Mary de Cleves was given in marriage to her cousin, Henry I. prince de Condé, in 1572, in order that by her charms and persuasions he might be converted to the Catholic religion.

The duke of Anjou, then young, handsome, and a conqueror, was also very amiable, and at that time pos-

sessed the energy of character and nobility of sentiment which he afterwards unfortunately lost. By his conquests at Jarnac and Montcontour, he gained the admiration of all Europe, who formed hopes which in the end proved vain illusions. This prince was greatly captivated with the attractions of the princess de Condé, and used every effort to obtain a responding sentiment; he even procured the assistance of his sister Margaret queen of Navarre, and of the duke de Guise, Mary's brother-in-law, but without success, although she was not insensible to his protestations for her.

While Henry was thus eagerly pursuing the princess de Condé, Catherine de Medicis, who feared that his attachment would induce him to wed her, if her marriage was dissolved on account of her husband's heresy, and who thought also that her own power would be weakened should the princess be raised to the throne, introduced to his notice one of her most beautiful maids of honour, named Renée de Rieux de Châteauneuf, daughter of an illustrious family of Brittany, John de Rieux and Beatrix de Touchères. Mademoiselle Châteauneuf, who was the very type of beauty, had a complexion of dazzling white, and a profusion of fair hair. This young lady, who obtained universal admiration, attracted also the regard of the prince, who composed sonnets to her charms and made her presents, the young

lady replied to his letters in verse, and this sentimental correspondence continued until the intimacy of the prince and Renée de Rieux was made public.

Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf continued to retain the volatile heart of Henry until, when elected king of Poland, he was obliged, in 1573, to take possession of his kingdom. On quitting France he confided all his jewels to Renée, with whom he constantly kept up an affectionate correspondence, and it is said, signed his letters with his blood.

Henry would, however, have resigned the crown of Poland for the possession of the princess de Condé, whose memory haunted him; he paid little or no attention to the affairs of his government, but passed his time in writing long letters to her as well as to Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf.

The princess lived in great retirement during Henry's absence, and devoted her existence to cherishing the recollection of a love which she had so vigorously combated. At length the death of Charles IX. brought Henry back to France, where he ascended the throne under the title of Henry III. in 1574.

Although the king lived a disgraceful life with his favourites, he still reserved his sentiments of affection and esteem for the princess de Condé, and expressed his desire to have her marriage dissolved, in order to

espouse her. The queen-mother made every effort to dissuade her son from this project, but in vain. The unfortunate princess died suddenly at the Louvre, in 1574, at the age of eighteen, poisoned, it is said, during her accouchement, after having given birth to Catherine de Bourbon de Condé; and this was doubtless another catastrophe resulting from the politic machinations of Catherine de Medicis.

On receiving the news of her death, the king fell down senseless, and great fears were entertained for his life. For three days he refused to take food; he put on deep mourning and wore a long rosary of small ivory skulls; he also had deaths' heads painted on his shoe ribbons.

At length, time, which triumphs over all, restored him to himself; indifference was soon begotten, and to indifference succeeded forgetfulness; moreover, Henry remembered with satisfaction the attractions of Louisa of Lorraine, whom he had seen at Nancy, at the court of her cousin, Charles III. duke of Lorraine, when on his journey to take possession of the crown of Poland. Louisa was admired for the regularity of her features, the elegance of her figure, her fair complexion, and sweet disposition, but she possessed little talent.

This princess was the eldest daughter of Louis count de Vaudemont, duke de Mercœur, of the house of Lorraine, and of Margaret d'Egmont; she was born at No-

mény in 1554. Her first misfortune was the loss of her mother, whose death occurred at her birth, but her place was supplied by the affectionate care of her father's second wife, Jane of Savoy. The ignorance of the age was such that her whole education consisted in her acquaintance with the Lives of the Saints; and, surrounded by governesses who filled her young mind with superstitious notions, Louisa mingled erroneous belief with her pious principles.

Her hand was sought by the counts of Luxembourg and Salm; but on Henry's sending his friend du Gast, in 1575, with a proposal of marriage, the offer was accepted, for Louisa had been less fortunate in her father's third wife, Catherine d'Aumale, who had treated her unkindly, but who, on learning the elevation of her daughter-in-law, endeavoured to repair the wrong, by being the first to announce to her that she was queen of France, and rendering her homage; she even begged forgiveness for the wrongs she had done her, and implored her influence in favour of her children.

Louisa could not recover from her astonishment until the unanimous compliments she received from all sides realized her dream of happiness, which had nearly vanished by the coquetry of her cousin, Mary d'Elbeuf, who accompanied her to Rheims to be present at her marriage and consecration. Mademoiselle d'Elbeuf, who was

as artful as Louisa was innocent, endeavoured to captivate the weak king by exercising all the seductions of her graces and intellect; and, astonished at the progress she made towards the monarch's heart, pushed her intrigues so far that, had it not been for the spirit of the quick-sighted and all-powerful Catherine de Medicis, who desired to have a slave upon the throne, and not a rival, she would have succeeded in obtaining the crown destined for her cousin. She persuaded the king that Louisa's calmness proceeded from indifference, and that she sacrificed by her marriage with him her love for the count de Salm, and that grief robbed the throne of its charms in her eyes; however, the queen-mother triumphed, and the marriage was celebrated with great magnificence in the cathedral of Rheims in 1575.

The king was so captivated with Louisa's appearance in her royal robes, that he passed the greater part of the day of her consecration in assisting at her toilette, which occupied so long a time that the ceremony did not take place until five o'clock in the evening.

At this epoch luxury made great innovations in the style of dress worn at court. Catherine de Medicis had brought from Italy false hair, paint, patches, and perfumes; the king, Henry III., covered his face with a cosmetic preparation at night, which in the morning was washed off. The ladies also, to preserve their complex-

ions, wore a species of mask, called "*loups*" on account of their hideous aspect ; and that frivolous fashion lasted until the time of Louis XIV., who, on taking the reins of government, commenced *his* career of gallantry, and introduced a more refined taste.

The king declared he had never seen anything half so beautiful as his royal spouse ; but her manners were cold and reserved in the midst of all her grandeur, and when the novelty which the sight of her beautiful face first produced had worn off, Henry ceased to attribute her unimpassioned temperament to gentleness and modesty.

Catherine de Medicis also, fearing the influence of the Guises in opposition to her ambitious views, endeavoured to break the union she had assisted to form. She had not much difficulty in persuading the king that the queen's insensibility arose from her constant attachment to the count de Salm ; and on the other side, she persuaded Louisa's confessor to make her understand that she should not shut her eyes upon the king's infidelities, as they were an offence to religion as well as to conjugal faith.

The queen, who was as credulous as she was devout, was the victim of these perfidious manœuvres. She did not hesitate to complain to her husband of his assiduities to Mademoiselle Chateauneuf ; and the king, who was

astonished that a princess whom he had raised to the throne should presume to oppose his inclination, attributed it to the advice of her former governess, Madame de Champi, whom, in spite of the queen's tears and prayers, he dismissed from court, as well as all the other women of her father's house.

Louisa bore her griefs in solitude, and the king, surrounded by his favourites, grew indifferent to her: far from trying to regain her husband's heart, she gave herself up to practices of devotion, neglected her dress, and appeared even to forget that she was queen.

The queen-mother, however, from interested motives, changed her plan, and reconciled the king and queen; and Louisa, whose innocence the king had really never doubted, became his friend and confidant; there was but one point on which they differed—Henry considered the Guises his enemies; Louisa looked upon them as the defenders of her religion, and under that idea was interested in them from her cradle; and when they were assassinated by the king's order, Louisa sent a courier to her brother, the duke de Mercœur, to warn him, and thus saved his liberty and perhaps his life.

After the reconciliation of the king and queen, Renée de Rieux had the imprudence to appear at one of the court balls in a similar dress, and with the same description of jewels, as the queen; and this affront so irritated

Louisa and the queen-mother that Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf received her dismissal.

Henry proposed to the count de Brienne Luxembourg, who had formerly sought the hand of Louisa of Lorraine, to marry Renée; he said to that nobleman, "Comte, j'ai épousé votre maîtresse; il faut que vous épousiez la mienne." This proposal, seriously made, resembled an order; the count of Luxembourg respectfully but proudly declined, and immediately quitted the kingdom. Henry then projected a marriage for her with Duprat de Nantouillet, provost of Paris. This man had publicly calumniated Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf before Henry's accession, and to revenge the insult, Renée, who was one day riding on horseback and met him on foot, galloped over him and trampled him under her horse's hoofs. She was, however, desirous to marry him when discarded by the king, but Nantouillet refused her hand; to resent which refusal, the kings of France and Navarre, having requested to sup with the provost, pillaged his house; upon which occasion he lost a valuable gold vase and fifty thousand livres.

Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf's pride did not prevent her from offering her hand to a Florentine, who married her, but whom she afterwards stabbed with her own hands in a fit of jealousy in 1577.

The king, who cherished the recollection of his attach-

ment to Renée de Rieux, suffered this crime to go unpunished, and even gave her the lands of Castellanne when she contracted a second marriage with the baron Philip d'Altonvittis. This husband also perished by violence, having conspired against Henry d'Angoulême, grand prior of France, who discovered the plot and shot him in 1586. The baroness de Castellanne retired to her castle in the Alps, and died at an advanced age, leaving one daughter, Marseille d'Altonvittis, who was celebrated for her poetical genius.

After the disgrace of Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, Madame de Sauves, who was surnamed the "*Circe*," attracted the attention of Henry III., who had rivals in the duke de Guise and the king of Navarre; and this lady's address alone prevented these three illustrious princes from having a serious dispute on her account. She was born in 1551, and was daughter of Beauve de Semblançay, who was superintendent of finances under three kings—Charles VIII., Louis XII., and Francis I. When very young she was married to the secretary of state, Simon de Fizes, baron de Sauves, and possessed a handsome fortune in addition to her personal advantages, and, being a great adept in intrigue, was a favourite of Catherine de Medicis, who appointed her, "*dame d'atours*."

Henry, king of Navarre, who went to the court of

France for the purpose of marrying Margaret de Valois, was much struck with the beauty of Madame de Sauves, who accepted his homage. His departure left the duke of Guise in possession of the fair Charlotte de Sauves, who would have saved his life if he would have listened to her advice, as she proceeded to Blois, where the king had convoked the states, for the express purpose of persuading him to quit the town, having had reason to fear the monarch's vengeance towards her lover. The duke was, however, deaf to her tears and prayers, and, half an hour after he quitted her on the following morning, was assassinated. Madame de Sanves then devoted herself to Henry III., whose death in 1576 put an end to her attachment; but being still young and rich, she married Francis de la Tremouille, marquis de Noirmoutier, by whom she had a son, Louis de la Tremouille. She never forgot the sentiments she had entertained for the king of Navarre after he became king of France, for to her advice he owed a part of the success he obtained at the battle of Coutras. The marchioness of Noirmoutier died at Paris in 1617, aged sixty-six years.

Henry III., on proceeding with an army to oppose the League, advised the queen to retire to Chinon in Touraine, where she lived in retirement, and with great simplicity. She dressed plainly and modestly, and daily visited the prisoners, for whom she established Divine

worship. It was in this residence that she was informed of the king's assassination at Saint Cloud, in 1589, by the monk James Clement. On receiving the news she fainted, and was for some days dangerously ill. When dying, Henry traced with a feeble and trembling hand these lines:—"Ma mie, vous avez su comme j'ai été misérablement blessé; j'espère que ce ne sera rien; priez Dieu pour moi; adieu, ma mie!"

This catastrophe excited a degree of energy in the heart of Louisa of which she had hitherto appeared incapable. She conceived a detestation for the League, and the fallacious principles which it fomented under the veil of religion. Convinced that her relations had instigated the murder of her husband, she vowed an eternal hatred to them, refused to see them, and unceasingly solicited their punishment. When Henry IV.'s authority was established, she entreated him and the parliament to grant her justice for his death; and in 1594, at a public assemblage in Mantes, solemnly renewed her demand for the punishment of the king's murderers.

Until the time of the revolution, Louisa's cabinet at Chenonceaux was still seen as she had left it; the hangings were, it is said, black and stained with tears. Her latter years were devoted to pious foundations and pilgrimages, and she submitted to fasts and austerities which abridged her days. She died at the château of Moulins

in 1601, and was interred at Paris in the convent of the Capucines, which Henry IV. built at her request. During the revolution her remains were transferred to the cemetery of l'Est ; and afterwards, in 1817, from thence to the royal sepulchre of Saint Denis.

She had but one child, who died at its birth. The streets of Paris were first lighted by order of this queen, who established the custom of fixing the images of saints at the corners of the streets, in honour of which statues, lamps were burnt near them throughout the night.

With Henry III. ends the branch of Valois, whose era is remarkable for the two distinctive characteristics of cruelty and licentiousness.

END OF VOL. I.



OF THE

INCLUDING

A MEMOIR OF HER MAJESTY,

THE

(MARIE AMELIE).

FROM THE SECOND LONDON EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:

1852.

Printed by T. K. & P. G. Collins.

TO HER MAJESTY,

Marie Amelie,

QUEEN OF THE FRENCH,

THESE MEMOIRS

ARE, BY GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

INSCRIBED BY

HER MAJESTY'S FAITHFUL AND OBLIGED SERVANT,

ANNIE FORBES BUSH.

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QUEENS OF FRANCE.

BRANCH OF BOURBON.

QUEEN MARGARET DE VALOIS.

(Reign of Henry IV.)

QUEEN Margaret de Valois was first wife of Henry the Great, and daughter of Henry II. and Catherine de Medicis; she was born in 1552, and celebrated for her beauty, talents, and vices. Margaret possessed Louis XII.'s easy good-nature, Francis I.'s taste for literature, and Henry III.'s superstitious piety; but she had also very depraved principles, and at an early age plunged into every species of disorder, having neither good example nor strength of mind to resist the seduction of vice in the midst of the most corrupt court in the world.

Like her brother, Henry III., she united licentiousness and devotion; for at church, and in the many religious processions in which she assisted, she appeared a model

of piety. Margaret's features were not regular, but very pleasing; she had soft and expressive eyes, graceful movements, and superb hair; she devoted much time to her toilette, in which she displayed great taste, and was the first who introduced the fashion of wearing gems and flowers in the hair.

Catherine de Medicis, proud of the eulogium which was bestowed on her daughter, conducted her to all places which she herself frequented. She took her to the interview at Bayonne, and Margaret, in her memoirs, has given a lively description of the entertainments which took place there; she also mentions the part she played in the political intrigues of the time, and the especial favour which her mother bestowed on her third son, the duke of Anjou.

The duke of Guise was very much attached to Margaret de Valois, and would have married her, although well acquainted with her disorderly conduct; but she was desirous of wearing a crown, and consented to become the wife of Sebastian, king of Portugal. This marriage was prevented by the king of Spain, who was jealous of the extension of power which Portugal would have gained by an alliance with France. At that time the Huguenots, who had been in constant warfare with the members of the royal house, were allured to Paris by the engagement Catherine de Medicis entered into with their chief, the young king of Navarre, to give him

her daughter Margaret de Valois in marriage ; and the princess, though scrupulous in her religious observances, did not object to ally herself to a Protestant prince.

The marriage was celebrated in 1572, with much ceremony. On account of the difference in their religion, the Cardinal de Bourbon pronounced the nuptial benediction at the church of Notre Dame de Paris, after which Henry conducted his bride to the altar, and while mass was repeating, walked in the cloister with some of the nobles of his court. After the conclusion of the ceremony the king of Navarre accompanied Margaret to the Episcopal Palace, where, as usual, a sumptuous banquet was given to the newly married pair. The queen-mother provided most brilliant fêtes on the occasion of this marriage, which continued for seven days, and it was in the midst of these pleasures that she prepared the horrible sacrifices of Saint Bartholomew.

On the evening previous to the massacres, Catherine, finding it late, recommended Margaret to retire. “Comme je faisais la révérence,” says Margaret in her memoirs, “ma sœur de Lorraine me prend par le bras, m’arrête, et se prenant fort à pleurer, me dit : ‘Mon Dieu, ma sœur, n’y allez pas.’” Catherine was irritated, and reprimanded her daughter for her imprudence ; to which Claude replied, “Quelle apparence, de l’envoyer ainsi sacrifier ? S’ils découvrent quelque chose, ils se venge-

ront sur elle.” This altercation concluded with another recommendation to Margaret to retire. Her sister burst into tears, and embraced her. “Et moi,” she continues, “je m’en alla toute transie et toute éperdue, sans pouvoir imaginer ce que j’avais à craindre.” She then relates that early in the morning the king of Navarre rose and went out, accompanied by several of his gentlemen, after which she composed herself to sleep, but was soon suddenly aroused by sinister cries; the door of her apartment was forced open, and a young man named Tersan rushed in covered with blood, and followed by four archers; he seized the princess in his arms, and she protected him from their blows. At length the captain of the guard arrived, dismissed his archers, and at Margaret’s request accorded him his life; he then conducted the queen of Navarre to her sister’s apartment, and as she entered the antechamber of the duchess of Lorraine a gentleman was killed by the stroke of a halberd not three paces from her, when, overwhelmed with the sight of such horrors, she fell insensible into the arms of Nancay, the captain of the guard. Charles IX. sent for the king of Navarre and the prince de Condé, and fiercely informed them that they should have three days to consider whether they would abjure the Protestant faith; which if they refused their lives should pay the forfeit of their obstinacy.

The marriage of the king of Navarre with Margaret had been the pretext and means by which the Protestants were assembled at Paris ; but their leaders, the king of Navarre and prince de Condé, were spared, and Catherine de Medicis, who was grieved to lose her prey, insinuated to Margaret that her marriage should be annulled, not only because Henry was her cousin, but also because she was exposing herself to eternal condemnation for living with a Protestant, and offered her the means of breaking off the marriage if she would consent to it. But Margaret, although very fanatical, and moreover indifferent to her husband, remembered that this rupture would deprive her of the crown of Navarre, and indignantly rejected her mother's insidious offer: to this refusal France is indebted for the paternal reign of Henry the Great.

Although Margaret was one of the handsomest and most clever women in Europe, and Henry possessed many excellent qualities, there was great incompatibility between them, and as their marriage was entirely political, it was not long before their mutual indifference became mutual aversion. Charles IX. said, "En donnant ma sœur Margot au Roi de Navarre, je la donne à tous les Huguenots du royaume." For in fact this princess put no bounds to her disgraceful conduct, which

was publicly commented on. Jane d'Albret, in speaking to her son of his future wife, made this remark: "*Elle est bien avisée, mais nourrie en la plus maudite et corrompice compagnie qui fut jamais.*" Happily for her peace, the amiable and clear-sighted mother had ceased to exist before the accomplishment of the evils which resulted from this ill-judged union.

Henry of Navarre and the duke of Alençon secretly swore to revenge the death of Coligny and the other victims of Saint Bartholomew. Two of the duke of Anjou's favourite friends were to head the troops against the queen-mother, but the conspiracy was discovered, the manœuvres of Henry were made known, and the two favourites, La Mole and Coconas, were arrested. Margaret wrote a memoir on the occasion, in which she justifies her husband without compromising his royal dignity, but the merit of this action is diminished by the circumstance of her defence having been principally dictated by her affection for La Mole, whom she wished to save: but she failed in her attempt; he and Coconas were decapitated, and on the scaffold the former recommended himself to the mercy of heaven and the prayers of Margaret de Valois. This princess, in company with her sister the duchess of Cleves, who was attached to Coconas, went after night-fall to seek the heads of these

two gentlemen, which they embalmed, and interred in Saint Martin's monastery.

On the occasion of the duke of Anjou's accession to the throne of Poland, the ambassadors were struck with astonishment at Margaret's abilities, she having been the only one at court capable of replying to the harangue of the bishop of Cracow in Latin, which was a subject of great triumph to a princess who so much loved admiration.

The duke of Alençon, Henry of Navarre, and the prince of Condé again raised the standard of revolt in 1576, and although the queen of Navarre took no part in the intrigues, she was nevertheless retained a prisoner in her apartment at the Louvre; but this captivity was of short duration, and it gave her an opportunity to favour the escape of her brother, the duke of Alençon; after which, Henry having retired to Navarre, she begged permission to be allowed to join him. During the journey Margaret received great honours, and was magnificently entertained at all the towns through which she passed, until she reached Béarn, where she lived for five years on tolerable terms with her husband. She quietly suffered the king's numerous infidelities, and even treated some of his favourites with complaisance. She could not, however, obtain any indulgence from him in regard of the Catholic religion, which was a circumstance of

great grief to her. At Pau there was not one Catholic chapel, and Margaret was obliged to hear mass in a small room of the palace which was not capable of containing more than seven or eight persons; and moreover, to prevent the Catholics from attending divine worship there, the bridge of the château was drawn up during the service.

On one occasion several Catholics, whose zeal was excited by the obstacles they met with, succeeded in forcing their way into the little sanctuary; upon which the king's secretary, Monsieur Dupin, being informed of it, arrested and sent them to prison. Margaret, who was greatly incensed at this circumstance, complained to the king, and compromised her dignity by declaring that she would quit the court if Dupin was not dismissed; accordingly Henry discharged his secretary, but he entertained great resentment towards Margaret for imposing this sacrifice on him.

At the re-commencement of the war between the Protestants and Catholics, in 1580, Margaret saw her favourite brother take up arms against her husband. Marshal Biron penetrated into Guyenne, and hostilities were carried as far as Nerac, the residence of the court of Navarre: the queen, who was fondly attached to her brother, mounted the walls, and anxiously watched the

movements of the two armies, regardless of the fire which Biron directed towards the château.

Catherine de Medicis, willing to withdraw all that she could from the Protestant party, wrote to the queen of Navarre in 1581, and invited her to the court of France ; and Margaret, who loved change, and who had met with vexation and disappointments at Narec, voluntarily quitted that residence. She could not, however, put any restraint upon her conduct when at the court of France, and eighteen months after her separation, gave birth to a son, afterwards the confessor of the Marchioness de Verneuil ; upon which occasion, Henry III., forgetting that she was his sister and the queen of Navarre, and that he had formerly encouraged her in her extravagant and intemperate behaviour, loaded her with reproaches, and ordered her to return immediately to her husband. After receiving this rigorous command, Margaret left Paris without escort or equipage, and almost without resources, declaring that there had never been two such unhappy queens in the world as her sister-in-law Mary Stuart and herself. To add to her humiliations and grievances, her litter was stopped on the journey to Navarre by a guard of King Henry III.'s archers, and two of her maids of honour, Mademoiselles Bethune and Duras, were grossly insulted.

Margaret met with a cold and haughty reception from

her husband, who bitterly reproached her for her disgraceful conduct when in France, and deservedly reviled her on account of the birth of her child during her visit there : by a singular fatality, that child was afterwards one of the agents of the conspiracy which shortened Henry IV.'s days. Overwhelmed with her husband's disdain, Margaret left Narec furtively and repaired to Agen, where to obtain a cordial reception, she announced to the Catholics, who were numerous there, that she fled from the king because he had been excommunicated by the pope, Sixtus Quint ; accordingly the town of Agen opened its gates to the queen, who made war against her husband ; and Margaret, who from a religious scruple could not endure the sight of an excommunicated hero, led a most dissolute life at Agen.

At length the place was taken by Marshal de Matignon, in the year 1585, and Margaret was obliged to escape by mounting Monsieur de Lignerac's horse, upon which she fled to Auvergne ; but, repulsed by the inhabitants of Carlat, she was arrested by the Marquis of Canillac, who conducted her to the fortress of Usson. In this castle she was condemned to drag on a life of captivity, although only thirty-five years of age, and still beautiful. However, she was not discouraged : she made herself so agreeable to the governor, that after a short period her jailer became her prisoner, and the Marquis de Canillac

was so captivated with his captive, that she became mistress of the fortress of Usson, from which she drove the Marquis, and afterwards fortified the castle in such a manner that it was almost impregnable, and in it she remained peaceably for twenty years.

Certainly Margaret had had much to complain of in the infidelity of her husband, and it is not without astonishment, and even compassion, that a great king and the father of his people, is heard to confess that he is incapable of conquering weaknesses which injure himself alone. "I do not deny," said he, "that there is much truth in the reproaches I have received respecting my love for sumptuous works, play, women, and balls, at which I may be seen with my gray beard, as vain and as much delighted at having received a ring from some pretty woman as I was in my youth; but I think I ought to be pardoned for these follies, which are no injury to my people, by way of compensation for all the troubles I experienced until I was fifty years of age."

Indeed he never was without favourites until the day of his death, and with the Bourbons commenced those contagious examples known under the specious name of gallantry. The first favourite of Henry mentioned in history is Mademoiselle Davila, sister to the historian of the same name, but improperly known under that of Dayalle; she was a Greek, and came to seek an asylum

in the court of Catherine de Medicis after the massacres of Cyprus; she afterwards married an officer named de Hemeri, one of the bravest men in the French army. The beautiful Greek was replaced by Mademoiselle de Rebours, and Henry's attentions to her at Pau in the presence of queen Margaret were so marked, that she expressed her dissatisfaction, and bitterly complained of the conduct of Mademoiselle de Rebours. The king yielded to his wife's supplications, by obliging the favourite to quit the court: the deserted one retired to Chenonceaux, where she died shortly after.

In 1585 the king of Navarre had a son by the gardener of Aret's beautiful daughter, from whom the poet Dufresny boasts of having descended. Voltaire affirms that Louis XIV. found a great resemblance between Dufresny and Henry IV.

After the dismissal of Mademoiselle de Rebours, Henry formed an attachment for one of Margaret's maids of honour, of whom the queen was very fond. This was Frances de Montmorenci Fosseux, who was daughter of Peter I., baron de Montmorenci, born in 1564. Frances, who was only fifteen years of age, was much flattered by the regard of her sovereign, and too weak to resist the temptations of ambition. The duke of Alençon, who also offered her some attentions, excited Henry's jealousy, which was the cause of a lasting disunion between these

two princes, for the duke reclaimed some towns from the king of Navarre, and on Henry's refusal to yield them, commenced a campaign against him; and this quarrel, which caused much bloodshed, was called "*la guerre des amoureux*."

Mademoiselle de Montmorenci Fosseux offended the queen by forgetting the deference which was due to her rank. Margaret, however, displayed one proof of the goodness of her heart by attending her most carefully at the king's request, when a serious illness was the result of the birth of a son; but as soon as she was out of danger she proudly refused to see her again. The king, instead of appreciating the queen's conduct on this occasion, was weak enough to feel offended, and Margaret received many mortifications from her husband at the instigation of Mademoiselle de Montmorenci Fosseux, who proved ungrateful for the goodness she had received from her. This young lady possessed the heart of her sovereign during six years; but constancy was not amongst Henry's numerous good qualities, and Frances perceived that the Countess de Guiche had replaced her in his affections; she therefore contracted a more solid and honourable alliance in marrying Francis de Broc, lord of Saint Mars. The time of her death is unknown.

Diana d'Andouins, Countess de Guiche, known under the name of "*la belle Corisande*," was daughter of the

Viscount Paul de Louvigny d'Andouins de Lescun, and the wife of Philibert de Grammont, count de Guiche, governor of Bayonne, and one of Henry IV.'s most devoted servants. During the life of her husband, the countess, who possessed a firm and superior mind, determinately refused to listen to Henry's overtures, but showed her regard for him in offering most useful advice. The count de Guiche having been killed at the siege of Fère in 1580, the king addressed most affectionate and consolatory letters to her, some of which are still preserved. In one of them he depicts the beauty of the island of Marans, the infinite number of beautiful birds which sing in its groves, and whose plumage he frequently sent to her; one of these billets finishes with these words: "Mon ame croyez ma fidélité être blanche et sans tache; il n'en fut jamais de pareille. Si cela vous porte contentement, vivez heureuse.—HENRI."

The promises of the good king were doubtless, as he confessed, beyond his power to maintain; for he committed a serious fault in neglecting to profit by his advantages against Marshal de Matignon after the siege of du Catelet in 1586, by his anxiety to visit the countess; and instead of pursuing the enemy after the victory of Coutras in 1588, he left his army, in opposition to the entreaties of the prince de Condé, to go and lay his

standards, banners, colours, and other trophies of victory at the feet of "*la belle Corisande*."

Henry, in compliance with the urgent insinuations of the countess de Guiche, would have procured a divorce from Margaret and married her, had it not been for the wise and prudent advice of the strict and virtuous d'Aubigné, who obtained the king's promise to wait two years before he formed that alliance. Some time before the expiration of the two years, the king had become indifferent to her, and a relation of the countess (the marchioness de Parabère) ventured to point out to the king the cruelty of his conduct towards her; but Henry, whose volatile heart had flown elsewhere, was content to promise her all the friendship which she so well merited. He was faithful to his promise, and received from the countess de Guiche many good offices on his various expeditions; for she sold her diamonds to provide the king with money, and mortgaged her lands in order to send him the succour of 2400 Gascons, whom she armed and equipped at her own expense.

She never contracted a second alliance, and long after she had lost all personal attractions, Henry continued his correspondence with her, in which he invariably assured her of the attachment he felt for her and her family.

The countess de Guiche died in 1620, at the age of

sixty-nine, and left two children by the count de Guiche—Antoine de Guiche, and a daughter who married Nonpar de Caumont, count de Lauzon.

In the midst of all the corruption of the courts of France and Navarre, history affords us the names of some women truly worthy of eulogium, who preserved their faith, honour, and disinterestedness among all temptations, and whose virtue and integrity the king himself extolled and recompensed. Such were Madame de Boinville, the countess de Guercheville, the duchess de Never, and Catherine de Rohan.

Antoinette de Pons, countess de Guercheville, was the wife of Henry de Silly, count de la Roche-Guyon. When the king first beheld her during the campaign of Normandy, which occurred in 1590, two years after his accession to the throne of France, she was a widow, and living in retirement upon one of her estates with her son.

Young and handsome, she had acquired polished and elegant manners at the court of Henry III., and Henry IV. offered her his homage; doubtless Madame de Guercheville was much flattered by the king's declaration, but she was content with telling him so, and perseveringly rejected his presents and offers.

Henry, who was equally persevering, had recourse to a stratagem. Having gone with a hunting-party to the

neighbourhood of Roche-Guyon, he sent a gentleman to request the countess to afford them an asylum for the night; and Madame de Guercheville warmly replied that she accepted the honour he offered her with much pleasure. Accordingly she prepared a magnificent supper, brilliantly illuminated all the rooms and windows of the château with torches, and dressed herself in superb attire; she then went to receive the sovereign at the principal gate, accompanied by her women and some gentlemen of the neighbourhood; and, after having thus courteously performed the honours of her house, she proceeded to step into her carriage and leave the château.

“What, madame,” said the king, “do I drive you from your own house?”

“Sire,” she replied firmly, “a king should be master of all, in whatever part of his states he may happen to be, and I leave because I fear that I may have something to refuse you here.”

She accordingly left the house and passed the night with a relation at some leagues’ distance. Henry, who was pleased with the countess’s virtue and spirit, but disappointed at his ill success, offered her his hand, but, to his infinite astonishment, Madame de Guercheville replied, “Sire, my family is not sufficiently noble for me to be your wife, and I will not be your mistress.” —“Since you are so *honourable* a lady,” replied the king,

“you shall be the lady of *honour* to my wife.” He kept his promise, for, when he married Marie de Medicis in 1600, he named the countess her first “*dame d’honneur*,” and sent her to receive the new queen at Marseilles.

Madame de Guercheville afterwards married Charles Duplessis, count of Beaumont, governor of Paris, and sire of Liancourt, and the king presented the bride to her husband at the altar. The name of Liancourt she always refused to assume, because Gabrielle d’Estrées bore it for some time. The countess lived many years at the court, where she was esteemed a model of virtue, and died at an advanced age much regretted in 1632, leaving one son, Roger Duplessis, duke of la Roche-Guyon, a peer of France; and a daughter, Gabrielle, married to the duke of la Rochefoucault. It was Madame de Guercheville who first introduced the *Abbé*, who afterwards became the celebrated cardinal de Richelieu.

Soon after the refusal of the countess de Guercheville, Marie de Beauvilliers, abbess of Montmartre, sent to Henry IV. to demand a guard for her convent of the Benedictines of Montmartre, which was founded in 1133, by Alice of Savoy, and which, during the long siege of Paris in 1590, was incessantly intruded on by the king’s soldiers, who introduced every species of disorder, and excited the inmates to reject her authority. The king

granted her demand, and Marie appeared to accomplish nothing more than a simple act of duty by going to express her gratitude for his acquiescence in her wishes. Henry, who admired the beautiful young abbess, complimented her, when, forgetting her conventual habit and her vows, she replied with a tone of coquetry which encouraged him, and the monarch, although a Protestant, did not scruple to offer his professions to Marie de Beauvilliers; he was not, however, long attached to her, for he had seen Gabrielle d'Estrées at Cœuvres, and she had made so forcible an impression on the susceptible heart of the monarch, that the easily won abbess was sent back to Montmartre, where she again assumed the reins of government at the convent. Some time after Henry added to her other titles that of abbess des porcherons et du pont-aux-dames. She lived fifty-nine years in the ruined abbey of Montmartre, for she could not persuade the king to rebuild the walls which his soldiers had destroyed. The greatest disorder prevailed in her convent in consequence, which, aided by several ecclesiastics, she at length succeeded in reforming, and died peaceably in 1657, aged eighty-three years.

Although much captivated with Gabrielle d'Estrées, Henry IV., who at first received no encouragement from her, avowed his attachment for Charlotte des Essarts, daughter of Francis des Essarts, baron of Sautour, who

was remarkable for her grace and simplicity, but had been very indifferently educated.

Before her introduction to the court, she had accompanied her aunt, the countess of Beaumont, wife of the ambassador of England, to that country, and on her return to France was created countess de Romorantin by Henry IV. She had two daughters by the king, both of whom were pronounced legitimate: the eldest, Jane de Bourbon, was the abbess of Fontevault, and died at an extreme old age, after having done honour to the life and habit she professed by her virtues and talents; the second, Mary Henrietta, was abbess of Chelles.

When Henry IV. had succeeded in combating the scruples of Gabrielle d'Estrées, he raised her to the post of favourite, and abandoned Mademoiselle des Essarts, who merited this desertion, having, without regard to her connexion with the king, encouraged the advances of the cardinal of Guise, duke of Lorraine, archbishop of Rheims, with whom she afterwards lived, and who it is said secretly married her. She had three daughters and two sons by the cardinal, who was killed at the siege of Saint Jean d'Angeli. Her desire to legitimate these children threw her into an intrigue in 1642, the purport of which was to conciliate the king and the Guises. But she acted unskilfully, and was moreover deceived by false friends, who betrayed her confidence; and, after

the treaty of Saint Germain, she was disgraced, and obliged to reside on one of her estates by the cardinal minister, duke de Richelieu. Her banishment from court and the defeat of her projects for the legitimacy of her children caused her much chagrin, and she died in isolation and exile at the age of eighty in 1651.

Of all Henry IV.'s favourites Gabrielle d'Estrées was the most celebrated. She was daughter of Antony d'Estrées, marquis of Cœuvres, and was born at the château de Cœuvres in 1574. The females of her family were remarkable for their beauty, but Gabrielle surpassed them all.

The authors and poets of her time celebrated her beauty even after her death. Her head was ornamented with a great profusion of fair hair, her deep blue eyes were fringed with long silken lashes, and arched with a finely pencilled eyebrow; her delicate and rosy mouth displayed a fine set of pearly teeth, and her smile betokened sweetness and graciousness; her form was elegant, and, as she gracefully moved along through groups of admirers, a tiny and well-shaped foot appeared from beneath her becoming robes. All her other attractions accorded with the fascinating ensemble, and the painters and sculptors of the time considered Gabrielle the most perfect model that had ever been offered to their art. The impression which her attractions produced upon the

generations who succeeded her may be imagined on reading the tribute which Voltaire has rendered to the memory of this celebrated woman in his poem entitled the "Henriade."

"D'Estrées était son nom ; la main de la nature
De ses aimables dons la combla sans mesure.
Telle ne brillait point aux bords de l'Eurotas,
La coupable beauté qui trahit Ménélas.
Moins touchante et moins belle, à Tharse on vit paraître
Celle qui des Romains avait dompté la maître,
Lorsque les habitans des rives du Cydnus,
L'encensoir à la main, la prirent pour Vénus."

Her father, the marquis d'Estrées, who perceived the dangers and seductions with which Gabrielle was surrounded, carefully watched over her, and endeavoured to inculcate rigid and severe principles of morality into her mind ; but although she was only thirteen years of age, she was well acquainted with her charms : moreover, she had been brought up in a convent, which is not always the asylum of virtue.

Previous to her introduction to Henry, Gabrielle had formed an attachment for the count de Bellegarde, Grand Ecuyer of France, an amiable and agreeable young nobleman, who would no doubt have married her and preserved her honour, if he had not had the folly to boast of her beauty to the king, who had never seen her. Being at Senlis in the king's apartments when Henry

was extolling the beauty of Marie de Beauvilliers, he laughingly informed him that the lady of his love (Gabrielle d'Estrées) was far more beautiful than his mistress, upon which the king resolved to go with Bellegarde to see the boasted beauty, and from that time the Grand Ecuyer was obliged to sacrifice her. In fact, after his first visit to Cœuvres in 1590, Henry was desirous of remaining there, but glory called him away to conquest.

Gabrielle, during the king's absence, rejected the offers of Henry Orleans, duke of Longueville; and, still attached to the duke of Bellegarde, continued to receive his visits, while Henry was busily engaged in the war.

At length the conqueror of Tori, who had nourished the passion with which the beautiful Gabrielle had inspired him, on his first moment of leisure flew to Mantes, where she was, and was not long in discovering her attachment for the grand ecuyer. Henry, forgetting his dignity, conducted himself with great violence towards Bellegarde, and ordered him to renounce her. The despairing lover could not avoid expressing some well-founded reproaches for the cruelty and tyranny of this order; and, seeing that her tears were vain, Mademoiselle d'Estrées left Mantes for the château de Cœuvres, where she found herself safe from the king, who wished to do violence to her heart, and take her affections by storm.

Henry IV., whom Gabrielle used to call "*mon soldat*," gave himself up to a most weak and puerile despair; history justly reproaches him with having abandoned his army, to which his presence was most necessary, and, accompanied by only five gentlemen, passed several corps of the enemy at night, in order to proceed to the dwelling of the object of his passion, for whom, at that moment, he would have compromised the destinies of France. When the king had arrived at Cœuvres his danger of discovery was so imminent that he was obliged to borrow a peasant's dress, and, loaded with a bundle of straw, he arrived on foot at the château. Gabrielle, who was not pleased at the sight of the king, whom she did not love, and finding no attraction in him when equipped in this unfavourable disguise, received him so badly that her sister, the marchioness de Villars-Brancas, was obliged to offer apologies and excuses for her. The young girl, notwithstanding, rudely quitted the king, which was all the recompense he received for the dangerous excursion he had made for her.

On his return Henry was much more warmly welcomed by his troops than he had been by his mistress: they were quite rejoiced at the danger he had escaped, and his virtuous friends, Sully and Mornay, again gave him

their wise and serious advice, which he was so apt to forget.

On a similar occasion his absence caused the escape of the duke of Parma, who crossed the Seine at Caudebec, but for which circumstance his retreat would have been impossible. At length, to bring Gabrielle to Mantes, the king sent for the Marquis d'Estrées, who had hardly arrived there before the fortune of war required Henry's presence elsewhere. Freed from the monarch's attentions, Gabrielle again received Bellegarde's visits with joy. He was not only much younger than the king, but much more handsome; he had a noble head, soft and intelligent eyes, and a martial deportment.

The duke of Longueville, who had for some time previously corresponded with Gabrielle, feared to offend his sovereign by the continuation of an intimacy which might bring on him his resentment, and consequently requested Gabrielle to restore him all the letters he had written to her. Mademoiselle d'Estrees, who had never loved him, acceded to his wish upon the fair condition that he would also return all her correspondence to him; but the duke, either from self-love, or a desire to preserve one of these precious documents, withheld one which was written in a somewhat impassioned style; the vindictive Gabrielle, who had faithfully performed her part of the

agreement, never pardoned her lover's perfidy, and the duke of Longueville, on entering Doullens, was struck by a ball in the midst of a volley which was fired in his honour.

The anxious father, who foresaw the intrigues and temptations that were gathering round Gabrielle, and thinking that all his vigilance could not preserve her, resolved to marry her to Nicholas d'Amerval, lord of Liancourt, who was rich, but possessed of little talent.

Gabrielle, who was only sixteen years of age, vainly refused this marriage; her father insisted on it, and she thought that nothing but royal power could interfere to prevent the union: she therefore begged the protection of the king, who was persuaded that her renunciation of Liancourt arose from her love for him: he could not prevent the celebration of her marriage, but he desired Monsieur de Liancourt to repair immediately to the army. The disappointed husband was obliged to obey this order, and the king took Gabrielle with him to the siege of Saint Quentin. This siege lasted some time, and Gabrielle had no female society while there but her sister, Madame de Villars, her cousin, Mademoiselle de la Bourdoisière, and her aunt, the Marchioness de Sourdis, who accompanied her for the purpose of giving her intriguing and ambitious counsel for the elevation of her relatives; she did not waste her advice, for Saint Quen-

tin was taken in 1591, and the Marquis de Sourdis was appointed governor.

Gabrielle is not altogether free from reproach in regard to her conduct with her former lover, the duke of Bellegarde, if the circumstances of the adventure which has been produced by Beaumarchais, in one of the most clever and satirical pieces which the French stage affords, are correct.

Mademoiselle d'Estrées was very extravagant, and her access to the king's coffers gave her ample opportunity for satisfying her caprices. At the ceremony of the baptism of one of her sons in 1594, she appeared in a dress which was loaded with precious stones, and carried in her hand a pocket handkerchief which cost nineteen hundred crowns.

Gabrielle has been accused of having poisoned d'Allibour, the king's doctor, but the statement is without foundation.

If Mademoiselle d'Estrées' taste and age differed from Henry's, and she did not really love him, she nevertheless triumphed in the glory of that hero, and was proud of her children, the royal offspring of so great a king. She constantly persuaded him to renounce Calvinism for the interests of his crown, and assisted in 1593 at the ceremony of his abjuration, which took place at Saint Denis.

Henry, who considered no sacrifice too great for this

idolized favourite, wished that all persons should do homage to her; and, had not Margaret de Valois so obstinately resisted the divorce, he would have completed Gabrielle's glory by placing the double diadem of France and Navarre upon her brow.

In 1594 she gave birth to Cæsar duke of Vendôme, at the château de Coucy, in Picardy; in 1595 the king created her marchioness de Monceaux; and afterwards declared his son Cæsar legitimate by the following proclamation:—

“Henri, par le grâce de Dieu, Roi de France et de Navarre, &c.

“Puisque Dieu n'a pas encore permis que nous en ayons (lignée) en légitime mariage, pour être la reine, notre épouse, depuis dix ans séparée de nous, nous avons voulu, en attendant qu'il nous veuille donner des enfans qui puissent légitimement succéder à cette couronne, rechercher d'en avoir d'ailleurs en quelque lieu digne et honorable - - - Pour cette occasion, ayant reconnu les grandes grâces et perfection, tant de l'esprit que du corps, qui se trouvent en la personne de notre tres-chère et bien-aimée la dame Gabrielle d'Estrées, nous l'avons depuis quelques années recherchée à cet effet comme le sujet que nous avons jugé et connu le plus digne de notre amitié. - - - - -

“Et s'étant, la dite dame, après nos longues pour-

suites, et ce que nous y avons apporté d'autorité, condescendue à nous obéir et complaire, et ayant plu à Dieu nous donner puis naguères en elle un fils, qui a jusqu'à présent porté le nom de César - - - avouons, disons, et déclarons, par ces présentes, signées de notre main, le dit César notre fils naturel, et ici lui légitimé et légitimons. - - - Donné à Paris, au mois de Janvier, l'an de grâce quinze cent quatre-vingt-quinze, et de notre règne le sixième.—HENRI."

In order to set aside all obstacles which might impede her elevation to the throne, Mademoiselle d'Estrées contrived to get her marriage with Monsieur de Liancourt annulled through the favour she obtained from the pope for using her influence towards Henry's conversion.

She assumed all the pomp of a queen, took her place beside the king in the council-chamber, and advised with him respecting the affairs of state. She shared the glory of his triumphs and his victories, was admitted into all the most brilliant solemnities, of which she was the ornament, and accompanied him to the assembly of the state at Rouen in 1596.

Henry was always delighted to avow his affection and confidence in her. "Je l'appelle auprès de moi comme une personne confidente, pour lui pouvoir communiquer mes secrets, et sur iceux recevoir une familière et douce consolation."

As Margaret's refusal to consent to the divorce was the only barrier between Gabrielle and the throne, she looked forward with certainty to overcoming that difficulty, and politically endeavoured to appear worthy of the expected honour, by gaining the esteem of the people.

The choice of a superintendent of finances, which was a question requiring most important consideration, and one which greatly influenced the destinies of France, was disputed at Monceaux, and the decision was referred to Mademoiselle d'Estrées, who merits the acknowledgment of her country, in having chosen the exemplary Sully, who was well known to be indifferent to the fair sex, and very severe in his notions respecting the king's favourites: his asperity in regard to Gabrielle and her extravagances was most particular.

Henry spent all his leisure time with the royal favourite, who resided in the hôtel de Schomberg, in the rue Saint Honoré, on the spot where the Oratory now stands: it was there, nine months after his triumphal entry into Paris, on arriving in haste to see Gabrielle after the campaign of Picardy, that in stooping to receive a petition offered him, he was stabbed by Jean Chatel; fortunately, however, his wound was slight. It was at her château of Monceaux that he accepted the forced submission of the most powerful and seditious of his ene-

mies, the duke of Mayenne ; and at that residence also, in a serious attack of indisposition, he received such assiduous care and attention from Gabrielle, that he still persisted in his resolution of marrying her.

She daily obtained more influence over the monarch, and as her power increased she could less endure the thoughts of a rival : her cousin Mademoiselle de Harancourt gave her some umbrage, and she dismissed her from the court, as also Mademoiselle de Senantes, of whom she was jealous ; she also formed an aversion for Sully, because he objected to the king's union with her.

Henry IV., as was usual with him, opened his heart to Sully on that subject, but with a hesitation which marked the combat between love and reason ; knowing, probably, that his devoted friend and servant would disapprove of his design. He commenced by detailing the qualities he required in a wife, and demanded so many merits, that the minister declared he thought it impossible to find such perfection in woman.

“And what will you say,” said the king, “if I were to name one?”

“I should say,” replied the confidant, “that your majesty must have been on very intimate terms with her, to be certain that you have not overrated her numerous good qualities.”

“As you will,” said the king ; “but if you cannot

recommend me a wife, I will name the one I allude to."

"Name her, then, sire," replied Sully, "for I cannot myself guess."

"Oh! you cunning rogue," replied Henry archly; "you could very well name her of whom I am thinking, if you chose it! for you have often avowed that all those good qualities are centered in my mistress: not," added he, "that I mean to say that I intend to marry her, but only to know what you would say, if, in failure of finding another, I should one day take such a thing into my head."

"I should say, sire," answered the minister, very gravely, "that your majesty, not being acquainted with a more suitable woman than the marchioness de Monceaux, by whom to secure children to the state, and from the fear of depriving your kingdom of so desirable a benefit, would forget the important considerations due to your royal person and dignity."

Sully then adduced other reasons to persuade him to alter his design, the principal of which was, that he would be embarrassed in regard to his children born before his marriage with Gabrielle and his divorce from Margaret. "Of course," continued the minister, "the younger children would be heirs to the throne, to the detriment of the elder; and from that will spring cruel wars between the brothers; wars which will perhaps

plunge the state into a worse condition than that from which you have preserved it." This conversation made some impression on the mind of Henry, but he did not, however, forego his project.

The birth of her third child, Alexander, caused a quarrel between Henry and Gabrielle, whom the king had created duchess of Beaufort. The duchess, always flattering herself with the hope of becoming queen, considered that her children's succession to the throne was certain, and surrounded them with such attendants and pomp as belong to royalty only, as if to accustom the nation to look upon them as their future masters. In consequence of these pretensions, she determined on baptizing her son with the magnificence usual to the royal children, and not only gave orders for a most extravagant outlay, but added to the young prince's name in the register the qualification of a son of France; and Alexander was presented at the baptismal font by Madame Catherine, the king's sister, and the count de Soissons.

Sully, whose duty it was to regulate the expenses of this ceremony, was indignant at the prodigality of Gabrielle, and refused to pay the accounts, which were considered debts of state, until the child's title as prince royal was effaced from the register, at which the favourite was so incensed that she resolved on disgracing the

minister for ever. She made bitter complaints to the king, who, to endeavour to reconcile them, conducted Sully to the duchess's apartments, having previously requested her to receive him kindly. The enraged Gabrielle would not listen to reason, but loaded the superintendent with invectives in the presence of the king. Henry for the first time reproached her, when she threw herself on a couch, and said plainly, that she would starve herself to death, since she had experienced the shame of seeing the king take the part of his valet in opposition to her.

"A valet! Ah! by my faith, Madame, that is too much," cried Henry, whose anger was vividly aroused; "that is too much, and I see plainly that you wish me to dismiss a minister who is invaluable to me; but I swear to you that I will do no such thing; and more, I declare that if I am reduced to the necessity of losing either, I prefer *one servant* such as he is, to *ten mistresses* like you." At the same moment the king turned to leave the room, but Gabrielle, who saw that she had greatly offended him, threw herself at his feet, and Henry, at the entreaty of Sully, became reconciled to her.

The king was enjoying the sweets of repose with Gabrielle, when he received news of the unfortunate surprise of Amiens by the Spaniards, and he immedi-

ately left Paris for that town, accompanied by the duchess of Beaufort, who was present at the ensuing siege. The grand master of artillery, Epinay de Saint Luc, having been killed on the field of battle, Gabrielle immediately demanded the vacant post for her father; but Henry did not like the Marquis d'Estrées, and alleged that officer's advanced age as the cause of his refusal. Gabrielle burst into tears, and vowed thenceforward to devote her life to the cloister: and Henry at once gave the marquis the appointment.

The army requiring all the attention of its commander, the monarch, at the request of his officers, sent Gabrielle to Paris, and brilliant success soon followed this generous resolution, for the treaty of Vervins, in 1599, sealed a glorious peace for France.

The duke of Mercoeur, one of Henry IV.'s most powerful enemies, had not yet declared his submission, which he wished to negotiate through the duchess of Beaufort, offering her as recompense the hand of his only daughter, the richest heiress in France, for her son Cæsar, duke of Vendome. This negotiation succeeded, and the ceremony of the betrothing of the young prince and Mademoiselle de Mercoeur, both of whom were very young, was performed by the Cardinal Tayeuse.

Margaret de Valois, either from motives of jealousy or disappointment, still refused to consent to the

divorce. Although that queen's conduct could leave her no pretensions to the heart of her husband, she nevertheless hated his favourite, and, without remembering the recriminations which her licentious behaviour authorized against herself, never spoke of Gabrielle without adding to her name those withering epithets which are invariably bestowed upon vice, in however elevated a situation it may be found.

Nevertheless Henry, vexed at the delay which attended the rupture of his marriage at the court of Rome, menaced the sovereign pontiff Clement VIII. to make him commence a process against the queen for adultery. The proofs were not wanting, and all persons knew that the result of it would be the elevation of the duchess of Beaufort to the throne.

The pope, however, constantly found pretexts for retarding it, and the king's ambassadors, Siller and Ossat, who were partisans of Gabrielle, at length declared to the pontiff, that if he was not more zealous in acceding to the king's wishes, that he would act without his concurrence. Clement accordingly ordered fasts and prayers, and one day, after a profound meditation, exclaimed, "*Dieu y a pourvu.*" The divorce was therefore expedited: but Gabrielle was never destined for the throne.

The duchess of Beaufort's death is accompanied with circumstances which render it very singular. At first

she had presentiments and interior warnings, the cause of which no person could penetrate, and which have never been explained. These sinister presages, which obscured her days and troubled her repose at night, were doubtless caused by the predictions of the diviners and astrologers who frequented the court, and were entertained by all queens and princesses at that period. She lost her cheerfulness, her imagination became afflicted, she had frightful dreams, and, on awaking, her woman would often find her bathed in tears.

The king being at Fontainebleau, religious scruples required Gabrielle to leave him, in order to spend the Easter at Paris. As she was pregnant with her fourth child, Henry thought that she would perform the journey with less risk by water, and conducted her to Melun, where she embarked. On a hundred previous occasions she had left the monarch for longer periods and greater distances without experiencing the agitation that tormented her at that time; but then, sad and melancholy, she embraced him with affection, and repeated her adieux with tearful eyes; she earnestly recommended her children to his care, conjuring him to protect them, and, once more throwing herself into his arms, bade him a mournful farewell. It was their last parting.

She arrived at Paris on the eve of Good Friday, in 1599, and disembarked at the Arsenal, at Zamet's Hôtel,

which was her usual residence when she made a short visit to the capital. Zamet provided a brilliant repast for the duchess, in which were all her favourite dishes. La Varenne, who was an intimate friend of the king, and who accompanied the duchess, wrote to Sully that she had dined with appetite; "*Qu'on la traita des viandes les plus friandes et les plus délicates que son hôte savait être le plus selon son goût; ce que, vous remarquerez selon votre prudence, dit la Varenne, car la mienne n'est pas assez excellente pour présumer des choses dont il ne m'est pas apparu :*" which remark gives rise to suspicions, though ambiguously offered, that Gabrielle did not come by her end fairly.

After rising from the table, she expressed her wish to leave that house, and went, accompanied by La Varenne, Mademoiselle Guise, and others, to attend evening service at the Petit-Saint-Antoine. Before quitting the church she felt unwell, and, supported by Mademoiselle Guise, requested to be conducted to her aunt, Madame de Sourdis, at the cloister of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, declaring that she would not return to Zamet's. On arriving at her aunt's she fell into horrible convulsions, and several times attempted to write to the king, but the agony she felt caused the pen to fall from her fingers. At length she gave birth to a still-born child, and expired twenty-four hours after in dreadful torture; the contrac-

tion of her features, from pain, disfigured her so completely, that her countenance could not be recognised.

On receiving the news of her illness, the king mounted his horse and set off at great speed towards Paris, but Marshal d'Ornario and others, who met him on the road, informed him of Gabrielle's frightful end, and entreated him to return to Fontainebleau. The king's grief amounted to despair; he assumed deep mourning, and directed the court to do the same; but though as a lover he bewailed her loss, as monarch he forgot her; the wise remonstrances of his friends consoled him, and in less than a month he was beyond their consolations, for he loved after his fashion, Mademoiselle d'Entraigues.

The parliament sent a deputation offering the king their condolences on the event of the duchess of Beaufort's death, and royal honours were bestowed on her remains. She had four children: Cæsar, duke of Vendôme; Alexander, grand prior of France; the duchess d'Elbeuf, and a fourth who was still-born. In the year 1820 a statue was erected in the department of Aisne to the memory of this celebrated favourite.

While Gabrielle was reigning over the court and the heart of Henry IV., Margaret de Valois was daily devising the most agreeable methods of lightening her captivity. Nevertheless the chateau de Usson was the theatre of vexation as well as pleasure, for on several

occasions her little garrison, which was but indifferently supplied with means, became a prey to discontent. In this critical situation, Margaret developed the energy of her character, and showed herself capable of better things than her conduct usually gave her credit for. In 1590, to quiet the most mutinous, she sold her plate, diamonds, and other valuables to supply their wants, and in the midst of the struggle against reverses and misfortunes, and the voluntary exile in which she consumed the last of her best days, Margaret had not even the consolation of thinking that the merit of her privations and sacrifices could efface the memory of the motive which called for them.

At length, Henry IV. having entered Paris as conqueror in 1594, Margaret became queen of France, but the shame which her conduct had brought upon her prevented her wearing the double diadem of France and Navarre. Henry declared he would never restore her to liberty till she would consent to renounce her title to the supreme rank ; and Margaret, who hated the favourite, preferred her dull life at the château d'Usson to the elevation of her rival, and, notwithstanding the most urgent solicitations, persisted in her refusal.

After the melancholy end of Gabrielle d'Estrées, being tired of her captivity, she sent the king her consent to the rupture of their marriage ; and Clement VIII. having

permitted the divorce, because she was in the third degree related to him, and also because their marriage had been forced by Charles IX., the separation was pronounced by the cardinal de Tàyeuse, the archbishop of Arles, and the bishop of Modena, in the name of the sovereign pontiff, in 1599, one year before Mary de Medicis left Florence to share the throne of France with Henry the Great.

Margaret's consent to the divorce did not immediately procure her liberty, and it was not until she had participated in the discovery of the count of Auvergne's conspiracy that she was permitted to visit Paris, when, glad to leave Usson at any price, she addressed a letter to the king, containing expressions of the most servile flattery, which were quite inexcusable; and, after a captivity of twenty years, appeared at the court of France in 1605, to render homage and assist at the entertainments of the new queen, where, insensible to all affronts, she thought of nothing but pleasure.

After having lived for some time at the château of Madrid, in the Bois de Boulogne, she removed to the hôtel de Sens, near the church of St. Paul, in Paris; not that the king refused this royal daughter of France an asylum in his palace, but Margaret preferred to live apart from her family, in the midst of the isolated gardens of the hôtel de Sens, where she could more freely

indulge in her profligate intrigues. This degraded queen did not long remain in that residence, having been obliged to quit it on account of the death of one of her lovers named Datte, who was shot there in her presence ; and this event, with the circumstances attached to it, rendered the hôtel so odious to her that she would no longer remain in it. She accordingly removed to the faubourg Saint Germain in 1608, and purchased an hôtel situated in the Pré-aux-Cleres, where she laid out large gardens on the banks of the river, and founded the convent of the Petits-Augustins ; an establishment as frivolous as her own character. One of the clauses in the arrangement of this monastery was, that the inmates should possess fine voices, and sing hymns to the modern airs which she herself selected ; and she passed a great portion of her time in her bed, surrounded by the children of the choir, whom she instructed in this species of sacred harmony.

The greatest luxury and opulence reigned in this hôtel. Henry IV. permitted her to retain the title of queen, but Margaret was quite unworthy of that honour. Her court was composed of cavaliers, poets, and musicians ; she received the learned at her table, cultivated literature with success, bestowed large alms on numerous poor persons, and ruined her creditors, who suffered for her prodigality. At the age of fifty-five she danced so well,

that, according to Saint Foix, Don John of Austria, governor of the Low Countries, went to Paris for the purpose of seeing the first dancer in Europe exhibit at a ball. Thus, wreathing garlands of roses with her silver hairs, Margaret passed her nights in festivity, and her days in eternizing the memories of her numerous lovers in poems and memoirs. An historian informs us that this queen “portait un grand vertugadin qui avait des pochettes tout autour, en chacune desquelles elle mettait une boîte où était le cœur d’un de ses favoris trépassés.”

In the year 1610, when celebrating the day of her birth by an elegant entertainment, Margaret received intelligence of the assassination of Henry IV.: the news did not much affect her, but her insensibility at the king’s death was not to be compared to that of her successor, the reigning queen, Mary de Medicis.

Towards the end of her life Margaret’s faculties were much impaired; she became hypochondriacal, and subject to convulsions of terror, caused by the recollection of the many tragical situations in which she had been placed: perhaps also her dissolute life, and the near prospect of the future to which she was hastening, created feelings of alarm and remorse.

She died at the hôtel of the faubourg Saint-Germain. in 1615, at the age of sixty-three: her body was placed

in the church of the Augustins, which she had founded, and was afterwards interred in the vault of the Valois at the cathedral of Saint Denis.

QUEEN AND REGENT MARY DE MEDICIS.

WHEN Henry IV. had resolved on re-marrying, several princesses were proposed for him : amongst others, the infanta of Spain, daughter of Philip II. ; Margaret of Lorraine, princess of Conti ; and Henry's cousin, the princess of Rohan : but his marriage was not negotiated with either.

Shortly after the death of Gabrielle d'Estrées, the king attached himself to Mademoiselle d'Entraigues, who, ambitious and artful, conceived the project of a marriage with him, which, but for the excellent advice of his minister Sully, would doubtless have taken place. Knowing his predominant weakness, and unwilling to lose the precious moments which the chance of winning the heart of the king offered her, Mademoiselle d'Entraigues went with her father and mother to Fontainebleau shortly after the death of the duchess of Beaufort. This lady was the daughter of Marie Touchet and Francis de Balzac, lord of Entraigues, and, though much less beautiful than Gabrielle, had studied from her childhood the art

of pleasing, and possessed an air of coquetry which gave a charm to her smallest attractions; she was intellectual and spirited, but satirical, violent, and jealous; her mother, notwithstanding her affectation of virtue, seconded her ambitious views and favoured her intrigue. She attracted the monarch to Malesherbes, her place of residence, where Henrietta d'Entraigues employed all her arts of dissimulation. The king's visits were at first encouraged, and when she believed herself sure of conquest, under the pretext of her objection to mortify and incense a rigid parent, she rendered their interviews more difficult, so that the monarch, as on a former occasion, had recourse to clandestine and dangerous visits in disguise. She then left Malesherbes for the château de Marcoussis, where Henry followed her; and she at length had the audacity to require, as the price of her virtue, the sum of one hundred thousand crowns, and a promise of marriage, if in the course of the year she gave birth to a son, which demand the king had the weakness to agree to, and sign.

Henry, as usual, consulted his sincere friend Sully on the occasion, and the minister requested time to reflect upon an affair of so much consequence. "Speak freely," said the king; "I wish it; I command it."

"You wish me to speak, Sire," replied Sully, "but

will you promise me not to be displeased at what I may say or do?"

"Yes, yes; I do," said Henry; upon which Sully, taking the document of promise in his hand, tore it in two pieces, and added, "This is my advice, Sire, since you desire to know it."

"Are you mad?" exclaimed the monarch.

"Possibly, Sire," said Sully, "and I wish to God that I were the only madman in France." The minister then retired, and, wishing to give his master a lesson in economy, brought in to the king's cabinet the sum of five hundred thousand francs, which he spread before his eyes, when Henry could not help avowing that he had paid dearly for his mistress's favours. Sully, who was really interested in the honour of his master and the welfare of the kingdom, then represented to him the danger of such an engagement; and Henry, who listened like a man that was conscious of his error, made no reply: after some moments of thought, as if drawn by some invincible power, he retired to his inner cabinet, wrote out another promise of marriage, and then went to hunt in the direction of Malesherbes, where those pleasures awaited him which afterwards cost him many corroding cares.

If the weakness of the unfortunate monarch cannot be excused, the noble and persevering confidence which he

preserved for his upright and virtuous minister deserves at least admiration. Sully thought he would have been disgraced after this conversation, because the king did not look at or speak to him on leaving his cabinet ; but it was conscious shame on the part of the monarch, as he avowed himself afterwards, on giving him the appointment of grand master of artillery.

Henry IV. was not without remorse and scruple for his faults. "I daily pray to God," said he to his historian Mathieu, "to grant me a victory over my passions, and, above all, over sensuality." If that petition had been granted him, or rather, if Henry had followed his prayers by striving against his besetting sins, he would have prevented the numerous troubles which were caused him by Henrietta d'Entraigues and her family.

This woman was his very scourge. By turns capricious or caressing, flattering or disdainful, criminal or repentant, but never faithful, she appeared to hold the monarch's heart in her hand, to swell it with disappointment, to inflame it with hatred, or to distract it with the frenzy of the most violent love. Instead of enjoying with her, as with Gabrielle, the pleasures of mutual confidence, Henry found her always opposed to him in sentiments, desires, and interests, so that he was obliged to be as much on his guard with her as with an enemy. She never considered herself sufficiently remunerated, having

demanding the abbey of Chelles, after having been created marchioness de Verneuil and received the domain of that name.

Fearing the king's inconstancy, she was desirous of accompanying him in his expedition to Piedmont in 1600, but Henry commanded her to remain at Lyon, where, to console her disappointment, he shortly after sent her the colours taken from the duke of Savoy. This royal gallantry flattered the pride of the marchioness, who believed herself still nearer the throne than the duchess of Beaufort had been. But she deceived herself; for Sully had already terminated the negotiations for Henry IV.'s marriage with Mary de Medicis.

When the marchioness de Verneuil was informed of the conclusion of this engagement, she gave loose to the most violent invectives of anger, which caused the birth of a still-born son. During her indisposition the king paid her most assiduous attentions, and when her health was quite re-established, she called upon him to marry her, according to his engagement. Fortunately the interest of the state was dearer to Henry than the marchioness, for he married Mary de Medicis in 1600.

This princess was the daughter of Francis II., grand-duke of Tuscany, and of Jane of Austria; she was twenty-six years of age when Henry sent his ambassadors, Sillery and Ossat, to Florence to ask her hand in

marriage. Mary's figure was tall, and her countenance handsome; she had a kind and generous heart, and an intellectual and penetrating mind; but these advantages were impaired by an inordinate share of vanity and an excessive degree of obstinacy.

By the marriage contract the grand-duke Francis II. gave his daughter for her dower six hundred thousand crowns, and a quantity of superb diamonds and precious stones, as also all the debts which Henry IV. owed him. After the signature of this document the grand-duke paid the usual honour to Mary as queen of France, and gave magnificent entertainments at the court of Tuscany to celebrate this glorious event.

The war which still existed between France and Savoy prevented the princess's immediate departure, during which delay she diligently studied the French language.

At length the duke of Bellegarde, grand ecuyer of France, accompanied by forty noblemen, arrived at Florence, where they were received by the grand-duke himself and his court. The ceremony of espousing by proxy was performed in the cathedral by the pope's legate, cardinal Aldobrandini, after which Mary embarked at Leghorn in a superb galley, escorted by a flotilla of seventeen vessels, and sailed for Marseilles, accompanied by her aunt, Elizabeth de Medicis, grand-duchess of Florence, her sister the duchess of Mantua, and Virginia

des Ursins. The vessel in which she performed the voyage was fitted with the greatest richness and prodigality, decorated with superb tapestry of satin and gold embroidery, ornamented within and without with jewels and pearls, and the escutcheon of the house of Medicis was traced in diamonds. Violent and contrary winds rendered the voyage perilous, but Mary displayed no alarm, and appeared worthy of the hero she had the honour of being allied to. The constable de Montmorenci, the chancellor Bellièvre, the cardinals de Tayeuse, de Gondi, de Givry, and de Sourdis, as well as the dukes of Ventadour, Nemours, and Guise, went to receive the queen at Marseilles; and amongst the ladies were the princess of Conti and Madame de Guercheville. The papal town of Avignon welcomed Mary de Medicis with the greatest magnificence, and three beautiful young girls, representing the Graces, offered her the keys of the town. She next proceeded to Lyon, where her royal husband was to meet her, and where she remained eight days, he being detained at the besieging of the fortress of Sainte Catherine.

Notwithstanding the fatigues he had undergone, Henry, on his arrival, before changing his dress, repaired to the apartment of the queen; on his entrance she knelt to him, and the king with his natural affability raised and embraced her; the same day the marriage

ceremony was performed in the cathedral of Lyon by the cardinal Aldobrandini. Three months after, the queen made her solemn entry into Paris amidst the joyful acclamations of the people.

Henry IV., who was an object of veneration to all Europe, and who had restored peace to France, could not find it in the bosom of his family. His numerous infidelities and the queen's jealous and haughty temper were the principal causes of his domestic dissensions. Although Mary professed attachment for her husband, she often forgot that he was king in the violent expressions of anger which her jealousy gave rise to. But Henry, who had never been jealous of Margaret de Valois, was still less so of Mary de Medicis, who, according to the count de Caylus, notwithstanding her apparent stateliness, was attached to Richelieu, bishop of Luçon, whom she promoted to the first ecclesiastical dignities; as also to Concini, whom she married to her favourite, Leonora Galigai.

Shortly after his marriage, the king, to appease the marchioness de Verneuil, left the queen, and went to her château; and Mary, deeply sensible of the affront, vainly demanded the dismissal of the favourite, who employed the arts of her charms and malice in opposition to the discontent and cold beauty of the queen.

According to the etiquette of the court, the mar-

chioness de Verneuil was presented to the queen by the duchess of Nemours; but although Mary received her graciously, she insisted on having Leonora Galigai as her *dame d'atour*, in opposition to the wishes of the king; nevertheless Henrietta did not oppose it, as she also received apartments in the Louvre.

This reciprocity of services could not, however, form a durable alliance between such incompatible elements. Although Henry did justice to the beauty of his queen, he preferred the society of the marchioness, whose court at the Louvre rivalled that of Mary de Medicis, who on her part could not endure to be offended in so public a manner. Leonora endeavoured to calm her mistress, and reconcile all parties, but the queen and the marchioness gave birth to sons within a few days of each other, which caused fresh resentment on one side, and new raillery on the other. The dauphin, afterwards Louis XIII., was born first, in 1601; and twenty days after, the marchioness gave birth to Gaston Henry de Bourbon, duke of Verneuil.

Fifty-eight years had elapsed since the birth of a dauphin had occurred in France, the last having been Francis II., and this circumstance gave great joy to Henry; but his happiness did not prevent him from yielding to the caprices of love.

The queen incessantly complained of the insolence of

the marchioness, and sometimes suffered her humour to lead her so far as to threaten the lives of her rivals, and above all Henrietta, whom she hated, and who in her turn revenged herself by petty insults, imitating Mary de Medicis' tone, gestures, and Italian accent: the king laughed at these absurdities, but the queen was furious, and demanded vengeance. Henry endeavoured to elude it, not wishing follies which were committed to amuse him to be treated seriously; but Mary insisted, and, seeing that the king could not hear of parting with Henrietta, believed that he preferred her, and gave vent in public to reproaches, and scenes of ill humour and vexation, that sensibly affected the monarch. Henrietta did everything to multiply those scenes, hoping that the queen's violence would annoy the king so much as to induce him to send her back to Florence, and flattering herself that there would then be no impediment between herself and the throne, or to her son's being acknowledged as dauphin.

Upon one occasion she declared in the queen's presence that she only became a mother under a promise of marriage, and Mary, in a fit of passion at her audacious remark, raised her hand and would have struck the king, if Sully, who was witness to the quarrel, had not restrained her arm, for which the queen accused the loyal servant of having insulted her. These interior

discords were so frequently repeated, that Henry several times threatened to send the queen, and her favourite Concini and his wife, Leonora Galigai, to Florence.

But the arrogance of the marchioness de Verneuil gained her numerous enemies, amongst others Gabrielle's sister-in-law, Julia d'Estrées, wife of George Brancas Villars, who projected her fall; and the queen, whose proud heart was wounded, encouraged all complaints against her. Madame Villars, who succeeded in obtaining the correspondence of the marchioness and the duke de Joinville, demanded a private interview with the king, in which she communicated to him the circumstances of their connexion, and laid the correspondence before him. The irritated king sent it to the marchioness by the count de Lude, accompanied by the most bitter reproaches: but Henrietta was not disconcerted, although her deception and infidelity were so apparent; she contrived to justify herself in the eyes of her lover; Madame Villars was exiled, and to console the marchioness de Verneuil, Henry presented her with six thousand livres.

At length the queen proved so clearly the infidelity of the marchioness, that Henry, thinking himself not less free, formed other attachments, amongst which were Mademoiselle de Sourdis and the countesses de Moret and de Limoux. He also offered his homage to Mademoiselle de Guise, and duchesses de Montpensier and Nevers, but

the prudent and virtuous refusal of those ladies induced the king to return to the profligate Henrietta d'Entraignes.

Henry having been indisposed for some time, this crafty and ambitious woman expressed to him her fears that, in case of his death, herself and children would fall into the power of the queen, and obtained his permission to retire to Cambria, which was then in the power of the Spaniards. *There* she could more conveniently conspire with the enemies of France; and Balthazar de Zuniga, the Spanish ambassador, was her partner in the plot to revive the promise which had been extorted from Henry to annul the marriage of the queen, and place herself on the throne.

During her absence, Henry found consolation in the society of her sister Mariette d'Entraignes, who was much more amiable than herself. He corresponded with her, made her magnificent presents, and invited her to court, but her father refused to suffer her to go. Whether it was that Henry found a charm in her conversation, or that he drew from her the plots of her family is uncertain; but he never missed an occasion of visiting her, and frequently crossed the wood at night, unaccompanied, for that purpose, which temerity seconded the projects of the count d'Entraignes, who thought the only chance of his grandson's accession to the throne of France would

be through the death of Henry IV., which he contemplated effecting. This man lay in ambush with a party of assassins, for the purpose of murdering him, but Henry's intrepidity and vigour triumphed over these dangers. He would, however, have perished, but for Mariette, whose father obliged her to demand an interview, and indicate an isolated spot for the rendezvous. She accordingly appointed the meeting, but sent to warn the king of the danger, and by that means saved his life and rendered an eminent service to her country.

In the mean time, the marchioness de Verneuil concocted her schemes, seconded by the king of Spain's agent, and supported in Rome by her confessor, the capuchin Archange Chonvallon, the duke of Savoy, and the king of Spain, as well as her brother the count d'Auvergne, and Marshal Bouillon. The apparent motive of this conspiracy was the re-establishment of the Catholic religion, which had been much weakened by the Protestants in France. Her conscientious scruples induced her to ask the king's permission to seek an asylum in England with her relation the duke of Lennox, to which request Henry willingly acceded; when the marchioness, irritated at having so easily obtained her request, which she hoped would have been refused or reluctantly granted, imperiously claimed the fulfilment of his promise of marriage. Henry, who esteemed her less than formerly,

assumed his sovereign authority, and desired her to resign the document, offering her as an indemnity the baton of marshal of France for her father, and twenty thousand crowns for herself. Henrietta and her parents protested that it was not in their possession, and declared at one time that it had been sent to Spain, and at another to England; this important paper was, however, found in an iron box buried at the foot of a tree in the park at Marcoussis. Her resignation of this document, which was given to the king in the presence of the duke of Montpensier, the count of Soissons, the president Teanin, and the chancellor de Sillery, who drew up the act, the marchioness declared to be not binding, as she said it was drawn from her by constraint: she therefore considered her son's right none the less imprescriptible.

If Henry thought that the ambitious projects of the family d'Entraigues were thrown aside by the recovery of this little document, he deceived himself, for their disappointment urged them to violence, and the count d'Entraigues determined to carry things to extremities. Supported by Philip III., king of Spain, the count d'Auvergne, the duke of Tremouille, the prince of Condé, and the duke of Bouillon, who reproached the king with having seduced her under false promises, they conceived the audacious project of having the dauphin's illegitimacy proclaimed.

This conspiracy was discovered; and if it caused Henry IV. uneasiness, what must have been the terrors of Mary de Medicis!—A queen, and mother, who found herself menaced with dethronement, and had the prospect of beholding the sceptre wrested from the hands of her son.

The king at first expressed himself determined to act with the greatest severity towards the conspirators. The count d'Entraigues maintained that he had only sought the honour of his daughter, and the count d'Auvergne endeavoured to throw all the blame on his sister, who on her part recriminated him.

The ungrateful Henrietta was allowed her own hôtel of Saint Paul for her prison, and her father and brother were confined in the Conciergerie. Closely guarded by a chevalier du guet, and deprived of the society of her children, the marchioness, far from exhibiting any alarm, unceasingly repeated, “If the king takes my life, the world will accuse him of murdering his wife; I was queen before the Italian . . . I claim three things from him; pardon for my father, a rope for my brother, and justice for myself.”

The queen demanded prompt justice, and the king, wishing to conciliate the dignity of the crown, with his natural magnanimity required the marchioness's submission, to enable him to pardon her; but, full of pride,

and bent on insulting the queen, she refused to humble herself or acknowledge her fault. During the course of the proceedings Henry often expressed his impatience at her not having made any efforts to appease him, or sent any message of submission.

“Do you think,” he said to Sully, “that she will humble herself, and ask pardon?”

“Yes,” answered the minister, “if she believes that you have no longer any affection for her; but if she perceives that you love her still, and that you have made all this commotion solely for the purpose of bringing her to your will, her haughtiness is sufficient to prevent her from ever bending.”

The parliament condemned d'Entraigues and d'Auvergne to be beheaded, and the marchioness to have her head shaved and be confined in the convent de Beaumontles-Tours for life; it was not until she heard the condemnation, that she made use of those efforts which she knew were all-powerful over the heart of the monarch; and the woman who two days before sent word to her sovereign that she would never be reproached “*d'avoir baisé la main qui l'enchaînait*,” at length threw herself at his feet, and induced him by her tears and protestations not only to suspend the executions, but even to change the disposition of the judgment. Entraigues was exiled at Malesherbes, and the count d'Auvergne con-

demned to remain in the Bastille, “pour mater son indomptable malice contre sa sœur;” as for the marchioness, she was restored to the king’s favour.

This triumph rendered her still more arrogant and proud, from the influence she possessed, and she forgot the public respect she owed the queen. During a journey to Saint Germain, the carriage in which the king and queen were seated was overturned into the Seine: Henry IV., with his usual agility, contrived to save himself, but the queen would have been drowned if Monsieur de la Chataigneraie had not plunged into the river, and dragged her from the water. The Marchioness de Verneuil, on being informed of the event, exclaimed that, as the king was saved, had she been there, she would have said with all her heart “*La Reine boit.*”

It might at least have been expected that Henry would have resented this insolence, since Mary’s first words, on recovering her respiration, were to make inquiries respecting his safety; but he took no notice of the remark, which was reported to the queen, and excited her just resentment against the king, for continuing to notice a woman who so often insulted her. A separation between the king and queen was the result, but after some little time a reconciliation was effected by the efforts of Sully and Villeroi.

At length, wearied with her capricious conduct, Henry

ceased to consider the unworthy marchioness de Verneuil as his mistress, but, notwithstanding her crimes, she still aimed at being elevated to the rank of a princess. She first listened to the proposals of the prince de Joinville, who proved inconstant to her before the conclusion of the engagement, and she afterwards had the banns of her marriage with the duke de Guise published. Nevertheless the king continued to see her occasionally; and even on the day of his death, walked with her in the garden of the Tuileries, conversed about her children, and promised her the release of her brother, who was still confined in the Bastille.

After Henry's murder, in 1610, which some historians assert that she was privy to, the marchioness had the mortification and disappointment of losing the husband that she flattered her ambition by the promise of a union with. The duke of Guise alleged that the preliminary contract was false, and, supported by Mary de Medicis, who was pleased to have an opportunity of retaliating upon her insolent rival, married the dowager countess de Montpensier. Henrietta d'Entraigues at length found herself obliged to retire to her château de Verneuil, where, after having obtained promises of marriage from three illustrious persons, she died obscurely in 1633, unmarried, at the age of fifty-four. She had two children by Henry IV., Henry de Bourbon, duke

de Verneuil, bishop of Metz ; and Gabrielle Angelique, marchioness de la Valette, duchess d'Epéron. The last years of Henrietta d'Entraigues' life were devoted to religious exercises ; she founded a convent of Annonciades.

Henry next attached himself to a young orphan named Jacqueline de Beuil, daughter of one of the most devoted servants of the crown, who had been carefully educated under the superintendence of Charlotte de Tremouille, princess of Condé. Henry created her countess of Moret in 1606, and legitimized her son Antoine de Bourbon, count of Moret, to whom he gave a wealthy estate. This young scion of the valiant Henry perished gloriously at the battle of Castelnaudari in 1632.

The countess offended the king by suffering some familiarities from the prince de Joinville ; he even ordered the prince to leave the kingdom in consequence, to which he never returned until after Henry's death, and the monarch discontinued his liaison with the countess de Moret, who in 1617 married René du Bec, Marquis de Vardes, by whom she had two sons, one of whom is celebrated in the annals of the court of Louis XIV. Talle-
mant des Réaux asserts that Jacqueline died from poison administered to her by accident.

After Henry's rupture with the countess de Moret, he determined to forego all future attachments. " You

know," said he in conversing with his friend Sully, "that in regard to my mistresses, which all the world knows to be my most predominant passion, I have checked them on some occasions, and greatly preferred your advice before theirs. And I will always do so," he continued with enthusiasm; "I will quit mistresses, love, the chase, buildings, and pleasure of every description, rather than lose the smallest opportunity of acquiring honour and glory, the principal of which, after my duty towards God, my wife and children, my faithful servants, and my people, whom I love as my own offspring, is, to preserve myself as a loyal prince of good faith and word, and in my last days perform actions which will crown them with honour and glory."

Henry spoke his wishes when he promised absolute empire over his passions for the future; but he was destined to give to the world one more spectacle of weakness, the result of which might have been more serious than any of the former, had not his death occurred before his projects were carried into effect.

At the age of fifteen, Charlotte Henrietta de Montmorenci, daughter of Henry I., duke of Montmorenci, constable of France, was presented at court by her aunt Diana d'Angoulême. A more accomplished or beautiful woman had not appeared there within the memory of the oldest courtiers. To her personal attractions she added

the charm of simplicity, being free from all artifice ; all the young noblemen aspired to her hand, which was accorded to the celebrated Bassompierre, and a short time previous to the celebration of their marriage the queen gave a ball, in which Mademoiselle de Montmorenci danced in the attire of the goddess of the chase.

Her fairy form could not escape the curious eye of Henry IV., upon whose heart she made a deep impression, the more lamentable because the object of his regard was but fifteen years of age, whereas he was fifty-eight. He soon perceived that Bassompierre, who was handsome, young, and clever, was much attached to his young fiancée, and in his anxiety suffered the secret of his passion to escape him, and entreated Bassompierre to resign her hand. In Bassompierre's memoirs it is said that the king one day drew him aside, and said, "*Bassompierre, je te veux parler en ami ; je suis devenue nonseulement, amoureux, mais fou et outré de Mademoiselle de Montmorenci. Si tu l'épouses, et qu'elle t'aime, je te haïrai ; si elle m'aimait, tu me haïrais : il vaut mieux que cela ne soit point bause de notre mésintelligence.*" Bassompierre, to whom this marriage was very advantageous, was with much difficulty persuaded to make this cruel sacrifice, upon which Henry embraced him affectionately and shed tears of satisfaction ; so insignificant and weak do the passions sometimes render the greatest of men !

Henry was desirous of forming a union for Mademoiselle de Montmorenci with his nephew Henry de Bourbon, prince of Condé, who was first prince of the blood, and in consequence heir presumptive to the throne in case of the death of the two young princes. He was exceedingly accomplished and clever, and much more devoted to study and the chase than to the society of women. The king's attentions to Charlotte were so remarkable that the prince hesitated to enter into an engagement with her, and requested his guardian De Thou to inform him that he objected to the marriage; the king, divining his motive, sent for him and said, in presence of the duke de Bouillon, "Vous pouvez l'épouser, sans aucun soupçon sur mon compte," and on that declaration the marriage was concluded.

The fêtes on the occasion were most brilliant, and the king presented the bride with jewels to the amount of ten thousand crowns. After their union magnificent presents to the princess and the house of Condé abounded, so that the king's generosity became a subject of suspicion for the husband.

Henry's love received no return from the princess, whose vanity was nevertheless flattered at having to number the king amongst her other brilliant conquests. In one of her letters she expresses her regret that the Cardinal Bentivoglio was not elected to the pontifical

throne, for in that case she would have counted amongst her lovers a pope, a king, cardinals, princes, and marshals, besides numerous noblemen.

The prince of Condé at first withdrew his wife from court by degrees, and Henry, noticing his precaution, tried to gain his confidence by new honours and gifts. The prince's confidants poisoned these gifts by persuading him that the king's liberality arose from a design to seduce his young wife; and Henry himself gave rise to suspicions by his imprudence. Not satisfied with expressing his discontent of Condé's absence from court, he several times disguised himself and paid nocturnal visits to the princess, for the pleasure of only enjoying a few moments' conversation with her.

These indiscretions confirmed the prince in his resolution of withdrawing his wife from those places which the king frequented. He conducted her first to Saint Vallery, then to Fontainebleau; and at length, finding that he unceasingly found his way to the princess's domicile, no longer hesitated between dishonour and flight, and formed the determination of leaving France without his uncle's permission. He had taken the precaution of retiring to his château of Verteuil, on the borders of Picardy, which he left before daylight; the princess rode on a pillion behind him, and was escorted by two of her women and two gentlemen, who proceeded in the

same manner until they arrived at the Low Countries, which were then governed by the Arch-duke Albert, who had married his cousin the Infanta Isabella. These two, who were united by the bonds of love and virtue as well as of marriage, retained the gravity of the ancient manners in their court. Their frequent balls and assemblies, instead of being accompanied with tumult, were conducted with that order and propriety which proclaimed the character of the host and hostess; gallantry was found there, but without irregularity or indecorum; gayety and cheerfulness reigned without constraint, because nothing was to be feared from calumny or malicious interpretations. All things were executed with order, and the women, following the example of the arch-duchess, employed their mornings in needle-work and domestic concerns.

Sully recounts the manner in which the news of Condé's flight was received at the court of France. Henry, who was playing a game at cards with Bassompierre, on being informed of it exclaimed, "*Je suis perdu, mon ami . . . cet homme enlève sa femme . . . je ne sais si c'est pour la tuer ou pour la conduire hors de France.*" He then hastily quitted the table and paced the room, sometimes stamping his foot violently and suffering exclamations of vexation and disappointment to escape him, while the courtiers, affecting sympathy and grief, turned

their heads aside to smile ; in the queen's apartment loud acclamations of joy were expressed at the event, but the most curious scene took place in the council, which Henry in his weakness and despair assembled, though it was past midnight.

Villeroi, the first speaker, was of opinion, that some sensible person should be sent to the prince of Condé to point out to him the impropriety of his proceedings, and to engage him to return to France with his wife. This advice required too much time, and the result of it was uncertain ; it was therefore not adopted. "Yours?" said Henry, turning towards Sully.

"This affair," replied the minister, "is too important to decide on immediately ; I have just been called from my bed when in the middle of my first sleep, and my conceptions are not yet awakened."

"No matter—say what you think it is best to do," answered the king hastily.

"Nothing."

"How ! nothing?"

"Nothing, sire ; and when the Spaniards find that you neither trouble yourself about the prince of Condé nor his wife, they will abandon them themselves." Henry turned pensively towards Jeannin, who had sufficient time to reflect upon what counsel would best please the king, and accordingly advised that the fugitives

should be brought back by force; that the archduke should be required to give them up, and if he refused, to declare war against him. This advice prevailed, and Praslin, captain of the guards, was immediately despatched with the message to the Low Countries, in 1610.

Albert's reply was noble and hospitable: he refused to favour the intrigue. He, however, entreated Condé to seek an asylum elsewhere, wishing to maintain a good understanding with Henry IV., and the prince was obliged to pass all along the frontiers of France to reach Germany. Praslin is suspected of not having used all the power offered him, from a compunction to act in so odious an affair.

The prince of Condé, not wishing to expose his host to any inconvenience on his account, would have taken his wife with him, but the archduchess would not suffer her to run the risks which such a journey would expose her to, and promised the husband to take care of her and conduct her to Brussels.

Henry, having failed in his first attempt, resolved to employ both force and stratagem to bring the princess back to France, and found but too many base and servile adulators to serve his views and encourage his hopes. The princess at first cared far less for the king than for the costly presents he made her, the fetes of which she

was the heroine, the distinguished preference, the praises, and the homage, amounting to adoration, which he paid her. But when the suspicions of her husband caused him to withdraw her from court and deprive her of all these pleasures, and when, moreover, she was wearied with the grave monotony of the court in the Low Countries, and felt herself under the severe guardianship of the Infanta Isabella, whose devout occupations and ideas caused her to exercise a rigorous watch over her actions, she began to regret her departure from France, and to feel indifferent towards her husband. The archduchess in speaking of the princess of Condé, said, “C'est un caractère angélique, dans lequel il n'y a à reprendre que sa passion pour le roi, qui est un sortilège.”

But there was nothing supernatural in this sorcery; the magic of it consisted in the counsels she received from the women who surrounded her in Brussels, and who were all gained over by the emissaries from France. They placed the king's letters in her hands, dictated her replies, inflamed her imagination, and easily persuaded a girl of sixteen, who was accustomed to a style of romance, to employ terms of tenderness and illusory expressions of love, which she considered nothing more than “*jeux d'esprit*” and amusement, but which redoubled the king's passion, because he imagined that they sprung from a heart which was entirely devoted to him. The

most artful of these women was the countess de Berny, wife of the French ambassador ; and the king sent Gabrielle's brother, Annibal d'Estrées, marquis de Cœuvres, to second her, with directions to risk everything to induce the princess to return.

At this time the prince of Condé returned to Brussels, and the king's agent, d'Estrées, recommended him to proceed to France with his wife, to which he promised to accede, provided he could live apart from the court and be assured of a place of security. The negotiators replied that it would be a precaution which was dishonourable to the king, and that if he preferred he could procure a divorce, in which case Henry would assist him. Condé did not refuse, but maintained that in the mean time his wife should remain with him.

D'Estrées at length resolved to settle the difficulty by carrying her off. He sent spies to watch them, and discovered the prince's place of resort and the princess's moments of leisure : certain of success, and aided by the women who surrounded her, he formed his plan of enterprise and sent it to the king, who counted the moments which should bring her back to Paris ; and when he judged that all obstacles were surmounted, and the execution of his project was infallible, said to the queen, "On such a day and at such an hour you will see the princess of Condé here."

Mary de Medicis immediately sent a courier to inform the Spanish ambassador, the Marquis Spinola, and her messenger went with such speed that he was at Brussels before the hour fixed for the abduction. Condé asked the protection of guards, which the archduke granted, and the prince hastened with them to the palace d'Orange, where he and his wife resided.

The rumor of the intrigue spread throughout the town, and d'Estrées, finding that his plot was discovered, determined to give the affair the most plausible appearance ; he therefore repaired to the archduke, and, though the hour was late, demanded an audience. He complained bitterly of the injurious reports which had been circulated respecting his sovereign, and requested that Condé's guard should be dismissed. Albert calmly replied that he was well aware an enterprise had been formed to carry off the princess of Condé, though he did not suppose the king had taken any part in it, but that in all probability it arose from the wish of some of his majesty's zealous subjects to oblige him ; but that to obviate any inconvenience of the kind he should receive the princess into his own palace, where she would be under the care of himself and his duchess.

This was a blow to d'Estrées' hopes ; he, however, did everything to cause a delay, and by his advice the princess feigned indisposition : at the same time she requested

the Marquis Spinola to give a ball, which with a smile he excused himself from doing under the circumstances. This man had always carefully watched over the princess in accordance with his orders, and paid her great attention, so that he was suspected of being influenced by a more tender feeling towards her than the interest of the case required. She perceived it herself, and on one occasion, when recounting the adventure, gayly remarked, "*Mon étoile me destinait à être aimée par des vieux.*"

At length d'Estrées, finding that he could do nothing more, informed Condé that the king expected he would immediately return to France, or he would be declared criminal of high treason; but the prince was not dismayed—he respectfully replied to the royal summons, but severely reproached d'Estrées for the part he had performed in the affair; however, to avoid being arrested, he returned to Milan, leaving the princess a second time under the care of the duchess.

All negotiations having ceased, Henry united with the duke of Savoy and the Venetians, put his troops in motion, and displayed to the astonished Spaniards the most formidable army that had ever menaced their power. To prevent this war Philip proposed a marriage between his daughter the infanta and the dauphin, both of whom were of the same age; but the king refused any nego-

tiation, and his refusal strengthened the opinion that it was neither for the interest of his allies nor for that of his kingdom that he was about to break the peace, but on account of his passion for the princess of Condé, who, like another Helen, would have seen Europe in arms on her account if the assassinating hand of Ravail-lac had not shortened the days of this great warrior and good king, but weak man ; who at the very moment he received his death-blow was on his way to the hôtel Zamet to visit a young Languedocian named Paulet, who was the daughter of his secretary, and the most beautiful singer at court, but of a very indifferent reputation.

After the death of Henry IV. the prince de Condé returned to Paris, and his sister the princess of Orange conducted his wife there, where she was re-united to her husband, for whom she had always entertained the greatest respect.

The Cardinal Bentivoglio, who took a lively interest in Charlotte, counselled the young couple to lay claim to the throne of France ; but the prince indignantly rejected his perfidious insinuations, fearing that if he aimed at attaining the crown he would not only be exposing himself to great risks, but also placing his wife, to whom the cardinal was attached, in the same dangerous position as before. They were therefore content to remain in the rank they already possessed, with the enjoyment of mutual affection.

From that time the princess strictly performed the most important duties of a wife, for when Condé was arrested and imprisoned in the Bastille in 1616 by Mary de Medicis, finding that she could not procure his liberty, she requested as a favour to be allowed to share his disgrace, and for the space of two years resided with him in the prison, where she affectionately devoted herself to him, and was the consoling angel of his captivity. Not less attached to her own family, she used every effort with Louis XIII. in favour of her brother the heroic and virtuous Marshal de Montmorenci, who was condemned to be beheaded: as she could obtain no grace from the king, she fell on her knees before Richelieu, in the hope of obtaining his pardon, but that cruel and heartless minister was content with raising her, and in his turn throwing himself at her feet; the despot was, however, deaf to her prayers, and Montmorenci was decapitated at Toulouse.

The brilliant spring-time of the princess of Condé's life was exchanged for an obscure autumn. She lost her husband in 1646, and languished in a decline for four years after, when she followed him to the tomb at Châtillon-sur-Loing, at the age of fifty-six, leaving a daughter, Anne Genevieve de Bourbon, who was married to Henry d'Orleans, duke de Longueville; and two sons, one of whom was Armand de Bourbon, prince de Conti,

and the other Louis II. de Bourbon, who was known to posterity as the great Condé.

The day previous to the king's assassination was the one fixed for the queen's coronation. Mary had been for some time very desirous of receiving the royal unction at Saint Denis, but Henry, who was unwilling that the nation should be put to expenses for luxuries, at first refused to give his consent to this ceremony; but, naturally kind-hearted, and perhaps also desirous of making her some amends for his infidelity, he at length yielded to her wishes. Mary appeared at this solemnity blazing with jewels, and Henry, who was gratified to behold her in these rich ornaments, heightened her glory and vanity by declaring in his enthusiasm that he had never seen so handsome a woman as his queen. The ceremony was performed at Saint Denis by the Cardinal Joyeuse in 1610, and magnificent entertainments were prepared to celebrate the occasion; but some sinister predictions had awakened the solicitude of the queen, which was but too well founded, for the general joy was turned into universal mourning, and the voice of all France exclaimed, "*Nous avons perdu notre père.*"

This great modern hero was not lamented under the palace roof of his wife as he was bewailed beneath the thatch of the cottage, for Mary de Medicis was ignorant of the extent of her loss. Two hours after the king was

murdered she had taken every precautionary measure necessary for assuring herself of the regency.

The duke d'Epemon, colonel-general of the French guards, who was not remarkable for his attachment to Henry, and who, though seated in the carriage beside the monarch at the time he received the fatal blow, neither attempted to prevent nor arrest the assassin, surrounded the house of parliament with troops, and, after haranguing the members, prevailed on them to declare Mary de Medicis regent of France; and from the moment she assumed the reins of government, discord began to manifest itself. Henry's faithful friend, the virtuous Sully, was dismissed from the council, as well as Jeannin and Villeroi; and this was the first act of her unskilful government, notwithstanding the late king, foreseeing the evil which would arise in France when he no longer guided the state, gave the queen that wise advice which should have been regarded by her as permanent laws. He recommended her to retain the services of those ministers he had placed in the council, to suffer no foreigners to interfere in the affairs of administration, and to prevent the increase of the Jesuits in the kingdom.

The discarded ministers were replaced by Père Cotton, the pope's nuncio, and the ambassador of Spain, all of whom were suspected as accomplices in the

king's assassination, but who were nevertheless loaded with favours. The Jesuits, who triumphed in the increase of their power, endeavoured to create new wars on account of their religion; and the state was agitated by the discontented Huguenots, to whom Mary de Medicis was obliged to accord the treaty of Saint Meneshould, in 1614.

The queen's friend and confidant, Leonora Galigai, and her husband, obtained entire influence over her, which gave great offence to the nobles; Concini, who had never used a sword, was elevated to the rank of a marshal of France, and his wife was appointed "dame d'atours," in the place of Madame de Richelieu, who had been chosen by the late king.

Unfortunately this excess of favour was bestowed on persons who abused it; for instead of moderating the extent of the queen's bounties, or sharing it with families who were capable of protecting them in case of a reverse, and thus avoiding the hatred and diminishing the envy which preference always occasions, these children of fortune, in aspiring to obtain too much, eventually ruined themselves, and dragged their mistress into the same abyss.

Leonora Galigai was one day asked how she had acquired so much influence over the queen. "Have you not employed philters, magic, and supernatural

means?" said her inquirer. "None," replied Leonora, "but that ascendancy which strong minds possess over the weak." Mary's natural obstinacy may have been one cause for this attachment, as it was remarked that any advice offered her on the subject only seemed to render her more determined.

"I well know," she one day remarked in public, "that all the court are opposed to Concini; but, having supported him in defiance of the king, my husband, I shall certainly support him against others."

While the husband regulated the affairs of state, the wife occupied herself with all concerns of a lucrative nature: she sold favours and privileges; she supported and forwarded petitions, just or unjust, provided she was remunerated, obtained large sums from the treasury, and filled her house with riches.

In 1615 the parliament remonstrated on the augmentation of pensions, and the immense expenses of the royal household, but were not heeded. Henry IV. had left a flourishing kingdom; he had paid twenty-five millions of debts, out of a revenue of thirty-five millions, and left thirty millions the fruits of his economy, in the Bastille; and the queen, after having dissipated these treasures, burdened the nation with taxes, placed France under the yoke of Spain, and by her culpable conduct confirmed

the general opinion that she was not a stranger to the conspiracy connected with the king's death.

In 1615, Louis XIII., who was then fifteen years of age, proceeded to Bordeaux, to receive his young wife, Anne of Austria, accompanied by his favourite companion, Albert de Luynes, who was very intimate with him, and made use of his intimacy to point out to the king the errors of his mother's government, and the odious power of Concini and his wife. Louis is said to have replied to him, on one occasion, "*Ce maréchal sera la ruine de mon royaume ; mais on ne peut pas dire cela à ma mère, parcequ'elle se mettrait en colère.*"

In fact no person ever carried the spirit of vengeance farther than Mary de Medicis. She could suffer neither remonstrance nor obstacle ; anger rendered her capable of any act of extravagance, and when from interested motives she was obliged to restrain herself, the violence of her nature expressed itself in the alteration of her countenance, and in her health. Gramond says, "*Nihil in fœmina medicum : si amat, uritur ; odio implacabilis est ; contempta, amens fit.*" So it was with the queen ; her passions were carried to extremes ; friendship with her was blind devotion, and hatred execration.

Louis XIII.'s majority had not yet arrived to deliver him from the rule of his imperious guardian, and France from its odious yoke ; but at length the king, wearied

with such insupportable despotism and hoping to pacify the nation, gave the fatal order for the fall of Concini, in 1617. The marshal, having entered the Louvre to proceed to council, was detained by Vitri, the captain of the guards, who demanded his sword. Concini made a movement either to surrender or defend himself, and at the same moment received three pistol shots, from which he instantly expired. The king appeared on the balcony to authorize this action by his presence, and was immediately surrounded and congratulated, as on the occasion of a public rejoicing. During this species of triumph, the queen's guards were disarmed, the doors of her apartments which communicated with those of the king were blocked up, and Leonora Galigai was arrested in the presence of her mistress.

During the remainder of the day the courtiers employed themselves in recounting the catalogue of vices and crimes of those to whom the day before they had bent the knee, and on the day following the populace exhibited a proof of their ferocious and turbulent character. Concini's body, which had been privately buried at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, was discovered, disinterred, and dragged through the streets, hanged, and then dismembered, and the authors of the catastrophe encouraged the blind rage of the mob, because their excesses proved to the

king that he had done right in sacrificing a man who was so much detested.

Nothing could exceed the astonishment and grief of Mary de Medicis on hearing the extent of her misfortune. She was mortified to think that she had been so easily deceived and overcome by the young king, and his equally inexperienced companion. She however still hoped to regain her ascendancy over her son, if she could only converse with him, and earnestly solicited that favour; but she was refused, and informed that she could not recover his good opinion until she had withdrawn herself for a certain period from the court. At this news, Mary, who saw the entire overthrow of her power, shed those bitter tears at the loss of her authority, which were much more due to the memory of her husband. The command to leave Paris was softened by her having had the choice of the place to which she would retire, as well as of the persons who were to accompany her; and she selected the château of Blois for her residence.

All the ministers that Concini had appointed precipitately retired, except Richelieu, bishop of Luçon, who was the queen's chaplain, and who was determined to remain by Mary de Medicis in her misfortune. He is, however, suspected of having sought his own advantage rather than that of the queen in this apparent mark of

fidelity, having been a spy upon her actions, more than a friend and counsellor.

At the moment of the queen's departure, Louis XIII. went to her apartment, but the interview was short. After embracing him, she begged mercy in favour of Leonora Galigai, but Louis was embarrassed, and retired without replying. Mary advanced to retain Luynes, who was quitting the room with him, but the king called to him to follow in an authoritative tone. The queen then took leave of her daughter-in law, Anne of Austria, who lamented her disgrace, although she had been the means of creating dissensions between herself and her husband, and afterwards proceeded to her carriage bathed in tears. Louis XIII. watched her departure with that air of entire satisfaction which a youth assumes when first freed from scholastic discipline.

But that was not the last scene in the tragedy. Leonora Galigai was also made an example, for suffering herself to be carried away by the torrent of fortune. She and her husband had met with riches and grandeur in their path, which had been opened to them by the friendship of a powerful queen; they had entered upon it with intrepidity, walked on in confidence, and in the end encountered ignominy and death. Leonora Galigai's great fault was her thirst for gold, and the crimes imputed to her displayed more of the rancour of her enemies than

that she had done anything worthy of death. Finding that they could bring no proofs of treason against her, she was accused of sorcery, of having corresponded with Jewish magicians and demons, of having refused to eat pork, to have neglected attending mass on Saturdays, and of having shut herself up in the church with Milanese and Florentines, for the purpose of practising various superstitions. These imputations seemed so puerile to Leonora, that when questioned respecting them she could not forbear to smile; but when she perceived that the judges persisted in the accusation, she wept bitterly, and said, that by such charges she knew they were determined to condemn her. She was spared nothing that could add to her affliction, but was made to drink the cup of sorrow to the dregs. Persons of all classes filled the chapel at the time her sentence was read to her. On entering, she exclaimed, "*Oimé, que de monde!*" and endeavoured to envelop her head with her veil, but she was obliged to remove it, and listen with her face uncovered to her condemnation.

The law declared her culpable of treason, both human and divine, and condemned her to be beheaded at the Place de Grève, her head and body to be burned, and her ashes to be thrown to the winds; her house to be razed to the ground, her lands confiscated, and her son, a most amiable and intellectual youth, was pro-

nounced ignoble and incapable of holding any appointment in the kingdom. Five of the counsel refused to agree to this iniquitous sentence, and it is said that Servin, the advocate-general would not assent to it, but under the promise of Louis XIII.'s pardon for the accused.

Leonora, disgraced in her honour, and that of her husband and son, for a moment gave way to her grief. At the worst, she expected but banishment, and was overwhelmed with a torrent of grief at the future lot which she feared would be the portion of her friendless son; but after paying this tribute to nature, she dried her tears, and armed herself with firmness. No more murmurs or regrets escaped her, she resigned herself with Christian fortitude to her unhappy fate, and listened with devotion to the consolation which religion offered her. She was dragged to execution through a crowd of persons who looked on in silence, and whose hatred appeared to have subsided into pity: entirely occupied with her religious duties, she noticed neither the populace nor the stake; intrepid, but modest, she died without boast and without fear.

The murder of Concini, the execution of his wife, and the exile of the queen-mother, were followed by the disgrace of almost all of their partisans. Richelieu, who had accompanied Mary to Blois, received an order to

quit her, and accordingly, retired to his bishopric of Luçon: he was afterwards exiled to Avignon.

Luynes and his associates took every precaution to prevent any communication between the king and queen-mother, who complained to all France of the severe captivity in which she was retained, without having the consolation of once seeing her son, to whom she declared she had most important state secrets to communicate, and which she would not commit to the keeping of his favourite. The duke de Luynes endeavoured to conciliate her with promises that the king, when released from the cares of state business, would visit her, but the interview was always delayed.

The honour of delivering the queen-mother from her prison was reserved for one of her own countrymen, named Ruccelai, and Mary's faithful friend, the duke d'Epemon. The former followed the queen in her exile, but returned to Paris under favour of the friendship of Bassompierre, and the promise of holding no correspondence with her. But Ruccelai had already determined on undertaking the enterprise; and, though a person of most luxurious habits, possessed that constancy and intrepidity which braves all danger and fatigue. He commenced by leaving his abbey secretly, and going to the neighbourhood of Blois, where he contrived to establish a clandestine correspondence with the queen-mother, and

as soon as he had made her acquainted with his plans, traversed the country in the midst of a severe December, evaded the spies who were scattered throughout his rout, and sometimes on horseback, and at others on foot, arrived at Sedan, where he proposed to the duke of Bouillon to put himself at the head of the party formed for Mary de Medicis. The duke expressed himself flattered at the confidence reposed in him, but declared that he alone was incapable of serving her, and indicated that the duke of Epernon was the only man who could undertake the charge.

Ruccelaï and Epernon entertained great animosity for each other; nevertheless the former determined to trust to the generosity of the latter, who was not unworthy of his confidence, and willingly joined in the confederacy for the release of the queen-mother. Their plot narrowly escaped discovery. Ruccelaï having placed some letters for the queen in the hands of a young man named de Lorme, who, imagining that the packet contained important information, proceeded to Paris, instead of Blois, and requested an audience with Laynes; but as he was supposed to be an impostor, who presented himself under false pretences to obtain money, he was suffered to wait in the duke's antechambers for three successive days. A parliamentary counsellor, named Du Buisson, who was much attached to the queen-mother, having been informed

by his valet that de Lorme was in Paris, and astonished at not having seen him as usual, sent to seek for him, when he found that he frequented Luynes hotel: suspecting some treachery, he despatched a messenger, who informed de Lorme that he was sent by Luynes to hear what he had to communicate, and handing him five hundred crowns, possessed himself of the despatches.

The queen-mother escaped in the night by descending a ladder from her bed-room window; she crossed the gardens of the château on foot, accompanied by her attendant Catherine, who conveyed her casket of jewels, Bresue, her equerry, and Du Plessis, Richelieu's brother. A carriage awaited them at the end of the drawbridge, and they proceeded to Mont Richard by the light of torches. She was soon joined by the archbishop of Toulouse and Epernon, under whose escort she reached Angoulême.

When the news of the queen's escape reached the court, Luynes, who was obliged, in conformity with the king's wish, to enter into a treaty with her, offered, as the basis of his negotiation, that Mary de Medicis should abandon the duke of Epernon, and that he should be made an example of. But Mary replied that she would never abandon a man who had risked all to restore her to liberty, and that, rather than expose him to the resentment of his enemies, she would take the whole evil upon

herself. Luynes determined to proceed to extremities with the duke, and sent troops against him. Hostilities commenced at the little town of Uzerche in Limousin, which was pillaged, and a universal voice was raised throughout France against this war, which was considered odious in its principles and dishonourable to the king.

At this time Richelieu, who was languishing in exile at Avignon, imagined that his services might not be rejected in the then embarrassed condition of affairs, and sent his brother-in-law René de Vignerot to offer them to the queen-mother, who accepted them, and requested that he would proceed to Angoulême; this circumstance having been known to the king proves that Richelieu entertained a secret intelligence with the court, of which Mary de Medicis was ignorant. This man acted with the greatest prudence; he appeared to desire no personal advantage beyond the esteem of the queen-mother, and affected the greatest attachment for Epemon; by which he gained the hearts of both.

It was at this period that Richelieu laid the first foundation of his fortune by his efforts to conciliate the king and the queen-mother, and an interview which took place at the château de Courcières, in Tours, was the result of his endeavours.

On meeting, the mother and son manifested more sur-

prise than affection. "Monsieur mon fils," said she, "que vous nous êtes fait grand depuis que je ne vous ai vu !" "Je suis crû, Madame," replied the king, "pour votre service." They passed three days together, but Mary de Medicis enjoyed more of her daughter-in-law's caresses than of her son's society, which she would have preferred. "How," she one day asked the prince of Piedmont, "can I obtain his good graces ?" He replied, "Love what he loves ; and those few words contain the law and the prophets." The advice was good, and Mary owed all her unhappiness to the neglect of it.

After this short interview, the queen-mother left Tours for Angers, hoping soon to be recalled to Paris. The famous friar Joseph du Tremblay first appeared at this time, and was the secret agent between Richelieu and Luynes. The former, by his skilful management, gained an entire ascendancy over Mary de Medicis, around whom he encouraged all the discontented who became formidable ; and the prince of Condé, whom Louis XIII. had liberated from the Bastille, attacked the queen's troops at the Pont-de-Cé : the expedition proved unfavourable for her ; and she was obliged to enter into a treaty, which, among other articles, contained the promise of a cardinal's hat for Richelieu.

The second interview between Mary de Medicis and her son, which took place at the château de Brissac, was

more cordial than the one at Tours. Louis XIII. embraced her, and said, "Je vous tiens, et vous ne m'échapperez plus." She replied, "Vous n'aurez pas de peine à me retenir, parceque je suis persuadée que je serai toujours traitée en mère, par un fils tel que vous." They then agreed to proceed together to Poitou and Guyenne, to pacify the rebellious and discontented; after which they returned to Paris, where Mary united her court with that of Anne of Austria, and skilfully recovered her influence over the king.

As long as Richelieu had been of service to her, Mary de Medicis protected and assisted in aggrandizing him; but when she saw the power of this Colossus, she was afraid of her work; his influence excited her resentment, which grew at length into hatred, and she determined on his fall.

Her enmity broke out on his return from La Rochelle in 1626, but Richelieu foresaw it, and Mary de Medicis was the only victim on the "*journée des dupes*." Yielding to her solicitations, Louis XIII., on leaving Paris for Versailles, promised his mother to dismiss the cardinal, who followed the king to that place, and so artfully insinuated himself into Louis's good graces, that he determined to retain him in his service; and when Mary arrived at Versailles, it was to be informed of her new disgrace.

Having refused all reconciliation with the cardinal, she was confined in the château de Compiègne, under the guard of Marshal d'Estrées, 1631; and her friends, her servants, and even her medical attendant, were imprisoned in the Bastille. She, however, effected an escape to the Low Countries, where she was kindly received by the archduchess Isabella; but in 1638 the war between Spain and France prevented her remaining there.

A wanderer, with indifferent resources, the widow of Henry the Great next sought an asylum with her daughter Henrietta, wife of Charles I., king of England. The king and queen of England welcomed her kindly, but the troubles which agitated that country rendered it an uncertain residence, and Charles endeavoured to reconcile her once more with her son. The cardinal minister would not, however, suffer their reunion to take place, and it was decided that she should be sent to Florence.

Mary de Medicis could not endure the thought of her native land being witness to her reverses and disgrace, and remained in England as long as she was permitted; but the parliament, with the redoubtable Cromwell at its head, obliged the forlorn queen to leave that country. She went next to Holland, where she hoped to remain, but the fear of disobliging the cardinal rendered the government deaf to her prayers, and she was robbed of

that retreat. The unfortunate Mary, abandoned by her children, rejected by her late husband's faithful allies, and obstinately refusing to appear at Florence in the state of humiliation to which she was then reduced, anxiously sought a resting-place : in vain she addressed complaints to the parliament of France ; they refused to listen to her remonstrances, as she had once refused to heed theirs ; and Mary was destined never more to see her son, or the city which she had embellished with the fine arts. She next chose the imperial town of Cologne for her place of residence ; it was free and neutral, and there she at last found refuge.

The king, whose heart was naturally good, but weak, would not have suffered his mother to remain in exile and abandonment, but for the insinuations of the vindictive and ambitious cardinal, who persuaded him that she favoured and conspired with the enemies of France ; and the indigence and misery in which Mary de Medicis died leaves an ineffaceable stain upon the memory of Louis XIII. and his crowned sisters, which no reasons, moral or political can excuse.

Her goods were confiscated, her remittances stopped, and she was obliged to dismiss all her faithful servants. During the severe winter of 1642, which was the last of her existence, she was not even provided with fuel, but was reduced to the necessity of burning tables, boxes, and chairs. The vexations and privations which resulted

from her poverty brought on a dropsical complaint in the chest, as well as other diseases, and this complication of evils terminated her deplorable career, at the age of sixty-seven. She was attended in her last moments by the elector of Cologne, and her body was transported to Saint Denis, where it was interred by the side of Henry IV.

The history of this unfortunate queen exposes many faults and errors, but the injustice and desertion that poisoned her latter days brings to memory her good qualities and merits. Generous in her friendships, she would have sacrificed her best interests for those whom she honoured with her attachment; but she rarely displayed any signs of tenderness for her son; it is said that during the four years of her regency she was never once seen to caress him: nevertheless she solaced the unfortunate, and was affable to her inferiors.

After her death her misfortunes excited pity, but none could deny that her own imperious and obstinate character had brought a great portion of her misery upon her. The king bitterly reproached the cardinal for the privations his mother had endured, and Richelieu, whose power was wavering at the period of her death, by way of amends presented Louis XIII. with the Palais Cardinal (now the Palais Royal), ordered a magnificent Requiem to be performed in honour of her memory at Terascon as

well as at Paris, and spoke of her as if he had shortly intended to restore her to France and regain her good graces. It is true that, when dying, she pardoned him; but the pope's nuncio, who exhorted her to do so, endeavoured also to persuade her to send him, as a sign of reconciliation, a bracelet which she wore on her arm; but Mary, impatiently turning aside, exclaimed, "*Non, c'est trop.*" The cardinal would doubtless have been much gratified with this mark of esteem, by which he could have justified his conduct to the king.

In the protection which Mary de Medicis afforded to literature and the fine arts, she proved herself a true daughter of Medicis. Some proofs of her portrait, which she engraved herself, and gave her painter, Philip de Champagne, are still in preservation. She recompensed Malherbe, encouraged the chevalier Marina, and built the beautiful palace of Luxembourg, in which she resided until her banishment. This residence, which was erected after the plan of the palace of Pitti in Florence, recalled to Mary the recollection of her own beautiful country; she therefore took delight in embellishing it, and commissioned Rubens to execute the numerous allegorical paintings which have so long decorated its galleries. She built several works of public utility, such as the aqueduct at Arcueil, and three hospitals; she also founded the

convent of the Filles du Calvaire, and planted the promenade known by the name of the *Cours la Reine*.

Mary de Medicis had three sons : the eldest was Louis XIII. ; the second, Gaston duke of Orleans ; and another who died young : and three daughters—one of whom married Victor Amadée, and was sovereign duchess of Savoy ; another was the wife of Philip IV. of Spain ; and the third married the unfortunate Charles I. of England.

QUEEN AND REGENT ANNE OF AUSTRIA.

(Reign of Louis XIII.)

FIVE years after the death of Henry IV., Mary de Medicis resolved upon an alliance with Spain by the double marriage of the princess Elizabeth of France with the prince royal of Spain, and the infanta Anne with Louis XIII. Accordingly, in 1615 the duke of Mayenne and the count of Puisieux were sent to Madrid to demand her hand in the name of the king, and the contract was concluded. Anne of Austria could not conceal the joy she experienced at the prospect of her marriage, and her youthful imagination created brilliant illusions, which, however, were soon dissipated. The

duke of Guise, at the head of a detachment, conducted the princess Elizabeth, destined for Philip IV., to the frontiers, and escorted the young queen of France to Bordeaux, where the king met her, and they received the nuptial benediction from the hands of the bishop of Saintes. The entertainments on the occasion gave the French and Spaniards an opportunity of displaying their splendour, in which they endeavoured to outvie each other, and the period of this double hymen was entitled *l'année des magnificences*.

Anne of Austria was the daughter of Philip III. of Spain and of Margaret of Austria, and was born at Valladolid in 1601, five days before the husband for whom she was destined, but for whom the result proved that she was ill calculated. She had a majestic carriage, a great quantity of light hair, which she powdered, blue eyes, an aquiline nose, a small vermilion-coloured mouth, fair complexion, and hands and arms that were celebrated for their beauty throughout all the courts of Europe.

Louis XIII. found much to admire in his young wife, but Anne entertained no affection for Louis: that prince, naturally cold, soon became indifferent to her charms, and Anne, though taught by Madame de Chevreuse, widow of the duke of Luynes, that a woman, though she does not love herself, should always endeavour to be

beloved, employed but insufficient means to win his regard. Moreover, their union was interfered with by persons who aspired to the exclusive confidence of the king, as well as by the queen-mother, Mary de Medicis, who inspired Louis with suspicions on account of her attachment to her family, and insinuated to the queen that her husband disliked her; so that their whole life was a continual divorce, which was occasionally interrupted by some reunions, the result of circumstances rather than affection.

From the commencement of her marriage Anne of Austria experienced deep mortification from having been obliged to dismiss all her Spanish attendants but one, called Estefania, and replace them by French persons; some of them had attended her from childhood, and she could not conceal her discontent at this imperious order.

Louis saw with anxiety her attachment to the house of Austria, but would not have blamed her for corresponding with her father and brother in Spain, if she had not excited suspicion towards her communications by concealing them, and also by addressing letters to known enemies of France. This augmented the king's indifference, and Anne of Austria enjoyed little happiness during her married life. Some of her historians assert that she gave Louis other causes for his neglect, both in regard of her friendship for the duke of Montmorenci,

and for Gaston, duke of Orleans. She is also accused of having favoured the advances of the duke of Buckingham, who was sent to Paris in 1625, by Charles I. as ambassador. This nobleman was gay and presumptuous; moreover, he possessed immense wealth and a magnificent establishment. The love he affected to feel for the queen gave great umbrage to the cardinal, for Buckingham publicly spoke of it, and accompanied his declarations with most imprudent attentions, until the king himself suspected his young wife, and Richelieu augmented his suspicions and increased his anxiety by persuading him that her intimacy with that nobleman would be injurious to the French nation; perhaps his motives were just and national, but they brought upon him the hatred of the queen.

The duke of Buckingham, when recalled to England, instead of taking leave of the queen in the ordinary form, went into her apartment, fell on his knees by her bedside, and gave way to the most extravagant expressions of grief, so that she was obliged to reprove him and inform him that it was a great innovation on the rules of etiquette to address the queen of France in that style; several cotemporary writers, however, assert that she gave him a pair of diamond eaglets on that occasion. The duke was sent to the succour of Rochelle, which was occupied by the Protestants and attacked by

Richelieu, who entreated the queen to write and request that nobleman to delay the departure of the auxiliary fleet for a few days ; Buckingham had the weakness to consent to her request, and during the delay Richelieu gained a victory, after a siege of twelve months.

It is said that the cardinal himself was in love with Anne of Austria ; that it was jealousy which caused his hatred of Buckingham, as well as his close surveillance of her conduct ; and that he not only addressed letters of tenderness to her, but also employed Madame Fargis to assure her of his devotion. But the queen ridiculed his passion. Her confidant, Madame de Chevreuse, who had also refused to listen to the minister's professions, one day asked her mistress if she would like to see the prelate dance a saraband in her apartment ; and the imprudent queen, delighted at the prospect of the comedy, determined to make a little fête on the occasion. At the invitation of Madame de Chevreuse, the amorous minister accepted this singular engagement, and appeared in the queen's apartment dressed in green pantaloons with small silver bells suspended from his knee-ribbons ; Boccau, the celebrated violinist, was summoned, and Cardinal Richelieu played the castagnettes and danced a saraband to Boccau's music : several young courtiers were concealed behind the draperies of the room, and

this burlesque scene excited the laughter of the whole court.

The cardinal was vindictive. He augmented the differences between the royal pair, and accused the queen and Madame de Chevreuse of having been accessories in the conspiracy formed by Henry de Talleyrand, prince of Chalais. This young man held the office of master of the wardrobe, and was arrested by the minister on suspicion of having formed a plot to dethrone the king and annul his marriage in order to enable his brother Gaston to marry the queen and ascend the throne. Chalais was beheaded, and his accomplices were exiled. Madame de Chevreuse was ordered to retire to her estate of Dampierre, in Lorraine, and in this comparatively slight punishment the cardinal certainly displayed the indulgence of a lover, although she had ridiculed his passion. The queen, whose participation in this conspiracy is very doubtful, underwent a severe mortification from being implicated in it, as Louis XIII. obliged her to be present at the trial, and with a bitter smile reproached her in open court for having desired another husband. "*Je n'aurai pas assez gagné au change,*" she disdainfully replied, but she wept bitterly, and entertained a most violent hatred of Richelieu for having brought that humiliation upon her.

Wearied with the society of her cold and indifferent

husband, as also with the monotony of the court, and desiring a residence of her own, away from the scrutinizing eye of the cardinal, Anne founded the convent of Val-de-Grace, at Paris, in which she reserved apartments for herself. She granted several privileges to that community; amongst others, that of bearing the arms of France, and of receiving the hearts of princes and princesses of the blood royal. In the seclusion of this establishment she passed her days with those inmates whose society she preferred, and who joined with her in her prayers for an heir to the throne.

This queen had been married twenty-two years before she gave birth to the dauphin, Louis XIV., but some historians assert that in 1629 she was delivered of a son, who is supposed to have been the mysterious personage known under the name of the *Iron-mask*, and whom they believe to be the son of the duke of Orleans, or Buckingham, or Cardinal Mazarin.

Whether this conjecture with regard to the unfortunate child is correct or otherwise, it is certain that there was some powerful reason for the method in which he was brought up, the precautions of which he was the object, and the mystery in which the circumstances of his birth are enveloped. It is, however, much more probable, as well as more honourable to the queen's memory, to believe that this person was the twin-brother of Louis

XIV., in which case political motives required all the secrecy which was observed; whereas, had he been an illegitimate son of Anne of Austria, it would have been unnecessary.

He was first confided to the care of a nurse, who was informed that he was the son of a nobleman of high rank, and afterwards placed by cardinal Mazarin under the charge of Monsieur de Saint-Mars, with whom he lived until that gentleman's death. At the age of twenty this young man eagerly entreated his guardian to give him some information respecting his parentage, which Saint-Mars invariably refused, and at length, by dint of unwearied perseverance, he discovered a casket in which was some correspondence between Louis XIV. and cardinal Mazarin, which, with the portrait of the queen, whom he strongly resembled, served to throw some light on his origin. In consequence of this discovery, Louis XIV. sent him to the islands of Saint Margaret, and obliged him under pain of death always to wear a black velvet mask, so as to conceal his features. This unfortunate man spent all his life in captivity.

When Louis XIV. was established on the throne and the absence of the mask from France was not necessary, the king ordered Saint-Mars to transfer his prisoner to the Bastille, where, confined in that fortress, this mysterious person was the object of particular care. He

was served on gold and silver plate, and regaled in princely style; the governor and officers of the Bastille, and even the haughty Louvais himself, always addressed him standing and uncovered. At length, after a captivity of nearly fifty years, he terminated his monotonous career in the Bastille in 1703, and was buried in the cemetery of Saint Paul, after his countenance had been entirely disfigured by mutilation.

During the reigns of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. the public was deceived by various false reports which were spread abroad, asserting that the prisoner was the duke of Monmouth, Fouquet, the superintendent of finances, the duke of Beaufort, the count of Vermondois, and the secretary of the duke of Mantua; but they were so various, that none were believed. Moreover, Louis XIV. was not cruel, and unless it was under circumstances of such serious consequence as the reputation of his mother, or the stability of his royal power, it is very improbable that he would have authorized this severe treatment of an unoffending person. After his death, the walls of his prison were demolished and searched, his dresses and linen burned, his plate melted, and numerous false reports and pamphlets respecting him intentionally scattered among the public.

All these precautions are sufficient indications to posterity that it was his brother whom Louis XIV. thus

treated; and some documents written by Monsieur de Saint-Mars, and recently discovered in the archives of the minister of foreign affairs, powerfully support the opinion. Perhaps that is one of the causes for the great influence which Cardinal Mazarin possessed over the queen, who doubtless confided to him her secret, if she did not give him her heart.

After the humiliating reproaches which Anne of Austria received from Louis, on account of the conspiracy of Chalais, and her withdrawal to Val-de-Grace, the king's existence was not less dull than her own. Those whom he honoured with his friendship were soon disgusted, because they were obliged to pass their time in puerile amusement, or to listen to his perpetual murmurs against his minister. He was separated from his mother, whom he retained in exile, prejudiced against his wife, jealous of his brother, in continual distrust of the nobles who surrounded him, and seeing only with the eyes of Richelieu, whom he detested, but without whom he thought himself incapable of reigning.

Thus friendless and unhappy, he acquired a taste for the society of some women who cannot be called mistresses, for he loved them only for the pleasure of confidence. His attachments to Mademoiselle Hautefort and Mademoiselle Lafayette were founded on sentiments of friendship, and consisted in the pure enjoyment of

their conversation and society. The first friendship of this kind that Louis formed was with Mary de Rohan, wife of the duke de Luynes; it, however, lasted but a short time, and then changed into hatred, because he discovered that she loved the duke de Chevreuse, whom she married after de Luynes' death.

The king's next friendship was for Clara, daughter of Marshal Hautefort, and of Renée de Bellay. She was born at Poitiers, in 1616, at the period of her father's death, and had hardly attained her fifteenth year when she entered the service of Mary de Medicis, in the capacity of maid of honour, under the care of her grandmother, Madame Flotte, who was *dame d'atours* to Anne of Austria. She was not particularly talented, but very amiable, and so pious, that at court she was designated *Sainte Hautefort*. Without being a decided beauty, her appearance was extremely attractive; she had large brilliant blue eyes, a bright colour, light auburn hair, and an elegant figure.

When Mary de Medicis was exiled at Moulins by the all-powerful Cardinal Richelieu, in 1631, Clara de Hautefort accompanied her, but, the king having expressed his disappointment at losing her society, the minister sent for her, and appointed her *dame d'atours* to Anne of Austria, in the place of Madame Flotte. The king visited her daily, and, although his attentions consisted

only in conversing with and consulting her, the queen manifested some signs of jealousy, which threatened Mademoiselle Hautefort with her displeasure. She however avoided everything that could occasion Anne of Austria any vexation, and paid her such unremitting and skilful attentions, that she gained her confidence and affection.

At that time Louis had acquired another favourite in Mademoiselle Lafayette, whose influence over him was too extensive to be gratifying to the cardinal minister, and he encouraged Clara de Hautefort to inspire the king with a dislike for her. That young lady was, however, an entire stranger to intrigue, and in consequence she and her confidant Mademoiselle de Chemerault were dismissed from the court by the prelate, and retired to the convent of Maddelonnettes. The weak monarch submitted to this affront in silence, and became much more assiduous in his attentions to Mademoiselle Lafayette. The minister, who was uneasy on account of this attachment, recalled Mademoiselle de Hautefort, for whom he professed a passion, and even offered her the title of duchess; but his offers were rejected with disdain, as she detested the minister.

Louis XIII., fearing to displease the cardinal, paid clandestine visits to Clara, who was still honoured with the friendship and confidence of the queen, which was

a new cause of resentment to Richelieu, who availed himself of every opportunity to display his dislike for her, and to endeavour to create the same feeling in the heart of the monarch. She, however, retained his favour for some time, in opposition to the minister, whose support she disdained. But Louis had a suspicious disposition: friendship with him was not always the result of esteem. He loved without esteeming, and esteemed without loving; and as esteem is imperious, it gave Richelieu that ascendancy over his sovereign which he unceasingly possessed, notwithstanding all the efforts of those he loved. The monarch, therefore, on finding that Clara was the friend of his wife, as well as of himself, became jealous because he was not loved exclusively, and, like all persons who are attacked with that malady, imagined that he was despised and ridiculed by both wife and favourite.

Several quarrels and reconciliations were the consequence of Clara's affection for her royal mistress, and one day, after some disagreement, Louis had the weakness to threaten her with the resentment of the cardinal, and accordingly addressed a letter to Richelieu, in which he set forth all his complaints against his favourite. When the letter was folded, he showed it to her, saying, "*Voilà votre scène que je fais à Monsieur le Cardinal.*" Clara immediately sprang forward, seized the letter, and con-

coaled it in her bosom ; then extending her arms, she exclaimed, “Prenez-la, tant que vous voudrez maintenant,” well knowing that the bashful monarch would never attempt to seek the letter in so singular an asylum.

Whether it was from antipathy to his wife, or from the fear of having unworthily bestowed his confidence, Louis withdrew his attentions from Mademoiselle de Hautefort, and attached himself more closely than ever to Mademoiselle Lafayette, who was a pretty brunette ; but though much less beautiful than Clara, she had the merit of repaying his fondness by a sincere affection. His only pleasure appeared to consist in hearing her converse and sing, and he sought in her society those consolations which the vexations caused him by the imperious cardinal rendered so necessary. This platonic love caused the queen no uneasiness, and Anne of Austria entertained great friendship for Mademoiselle de Lafayette. This young lady was the only daughter of John de Lafayette and Margaret de Bourbon Busset ; her modesty and high birth rendered her a desirable attendant for the queen, and at the age of eighteen she was appointed maid of honour.

Richelieu had chosen Joseph de Tremblay to be Louis XIII.'s confessor. This man was talented, artful, and ambitious, and conceived the bold project of supplanting the cardinal, to effect which he obtained the assistance

of his cousin Louisa Mary de Lafayette, and both strove to undermine the power of the prelate, who, skilful politician as he was, soon discovered the error he had committed in suffering two relatives to be the intimates of the king. Père Joseph failed in his perilous enterprise, and Richelieu entertained great animosity for the royal favourite, whom he endeavoured by every means to remove from the court.

At this period, 1637, Anne of Austria, who had sought consolation in her sadness by corresponding with her brother, the king of Spain, and several persons at the courts of Madrid and Brussels, was accused by the cardinal of intriguing against the king and state. Louis was easily persuaded of his wife's criminality, and resolved, at the instigation of the minister, to detect and punish her. He accordingly gave order to the chancellor Seguier, who proceeded to the convent of Val-de-Grace, where he broke open the closets in her apartment, searched the drawers and boxes, seized all her papers, interrogated the nuns and the queen herself, and even obliged her to deliver up a letter which she had concealed about her person. At the same time he arrested and imprisoned all her faithful attendants, and Anne was constrained to follow her husband to Chantilly, where she was closely confined in her own chamber, and attended

only by a few persons who were absolutely necessary for her service.

As disgrace is contagious, the courtiers avoided all who were considered attached to her ; it was remarked that in crossing the court-yard of the palace no persons even dared to turn their eyes towards the windows of her apartment, and it was publicly reported that she was to be sent back to Spain ;—a singular menace after a twenty years' marriage ! The queen's agents denied all knowledge of the clandestine correspondence imputed to her ; and notwithstanding the threats of Richelieu, who questioned them like a man bent on finding them culpable, and who, to terrify them into an avowal, placed the instruments of torture before their eyes, they still remained steadfast to their assertions of entire ignorance.

The queen, who had been reprimanded in open council on the occasion of Chalais' conspiracy, had been obliged to sign a paper by which she acknowledged that she had been guilty of an imprudence ; for when Richelieu could not find sufficient proofs of criminality against the objects of his hatred, one of his plans of policy was to procure a document against them, in case of a relapse, or a new opportunity for accusation. But his ill-will on this occasion, though carried to extremes, was without effect ; and it was believed that the chancellor must have secretly warned the queen of the search he was about

to make, for they found nothing in the *escritaires* at Val-de-Grace but useless papers, and in the closets several sackcloth garments and monastic scourges, which it was believed were placed there in derision of the cardinal. The queen was at length permitted to return to Paris, and Richelieu, as was his usual custom, took the credit of having befriended her throughout the affair, and also of having, through his solicitations, restored her to the king's favour.

But the reconciliation of Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria was in reality the result of the remonstrances of Mademoiselle de Lafayette, whose conduct offers a model of virtue rarely to be found in history. Sensible of the king's affection for her, she loved him, interested herself in his glory, and was desirous of restoring happiness to him in the bosom of his family, as well as in his kingdom; but Louis's pusillanimity prevented the accomplishment of her desires. When he beheld himself surrounded with intrigues, he believed it was impossible to overcome them without the aid of his minister; while every other person believed that it was his minister who encompassed him with the troubles like nets, to oblige him to retain his services, and that upon his absence all difficulties would be surmounted. But it was difficult to impress those ideas upon the king's mind without Richelieu perceiving it, and still more difficult to prevent him

from eradicating them; and Mademoiselle Lafayette acknowledged with grief that Louis was conscious of his chain, but believed it indispensable, and that to preserve the monarch's favour she must permit to partake of his bondage. Too proud to be dependent upon the will of any but that of her sovereign, and moreover feeling alarmed for her virtue, she determined to break an attachment the result of which she feared would be injurious to the happiness of both. She herself recounts that Louis, who was usually very reserved, one day offered her an apartment at Versailles, where he could visit her more freely, and that he made this offer with a warmth and tenderness of manner that surprised her. Mademoiselle Lafayette does not say that she partook of the king's emotion, but she confesses that she loved him, and that after some remonstrances he apologized to her for giving way to the transports of his passion; that she was ashamed of having occasioned it, and considered that the best means of securing them both against their mutual weakness was to separate; moreover she thought she could serve the king better by her friendly advice when in a convent free from the investigation of the minister. She accordingly retired to that of the Visitation, at Paris.

The king urged her not to take the veil, and confessed that his consent to her retirement from court cost him

much sorrow ; and Richelieu, who had hastened her retreat, by fortifying Louis's scruples, gained nothing, for, although the latter left Paris, and went to reside at Grosbois, he saw her more frequently than ever, feeling that they were safe from all indiscretion by the position that his respected and much beloved friend had chosen ; and she, being beyond the cardinal's displeasure, and having nothing to lose, spoke her sentiments and gave him her advice more freely.

The king's visits to the parlour of the Visitation were so long and so frequent, that they caused Richelieu infinite anxiety, and, despairing of dissolving a tie which was strengthened by gentle familiarity and true friendship, sought amongst Louis's most intimate attendants a spy who could discover all that passed between the monarch and the favourite. His choice fell upon a valet-de-chambre called Boisival. This perfidious servant repeated all their conversation to the cardinal, and even procured him the letters which Louis wrote and received from Mademoiselle de Lafayette ; some of them he suppressed, others falsified, and introduced into them expressions which he knew would wound ; and thus succeeded in creating discontent and coldness between them, which so much piqued the pride of both, that they ceased to see each other, without deigning to explain the reason why.

The queen, who was much attached to Mademoiselle de Lafayette, was exceedingly grieved at this estrangement between her friend and the king, for, although she had never displayed the same attachment for Anne of Austria as Mademoiselle Hautefort had done, she had rendered her much greater services in the efforts she had made to reconcile her husband to her.

The sad and valetudinary Louis, after a short separation, felt once more inclined to call at the parlour of the Visitation without the knowledge of the cardinal, where he held a long conversation with Mademoiselle de Lafayette, who had discovered Richelieu's intrigue, and fully explained to him that they had been the subjects of the minister's treachery; and at the same time profited by the ascendancy she gained over the king in the discovery, by destroying the unhappy prejudices he had conceived against his wife, and affecting the reunion of the royal pair. She was so urgent on the occasion, and entreated him so warmly to be reunited to her, that Louis, who had remained at the convent too late to return to Grosbois that night, left her with the promise to repair to his wife's apartment in the Louvre; and the consequences of this reunion, after twelve years of total estrangement and twenty-two of sterility, was the birth of the dauphin, afterwards Louis XIV., in 1638.

The queen, who gratefully acknowledged the kind

offices of Mademoiselle de Lafayette, exerted all her efforts to prevent the consummation of her vows ; but her endeavours were fruitless, as also the prayers of the king ; which, finding it difficult to resist, she put an end to by immediately taking the veil in the convent of the Visitation, where she lived esteemed by all, after giving the world the example of a young girl, who, in the age of passion, and surrounded by temptations, generously immolated herself, not only to escape crime, but also to avoid drawing the monarch whom she loved into the same offence. This virtuous Visitandine died in 1665, at the convent of Saint Marie de Chaillat, of which she was the benefactress.

In 1640 Anne of Austria gave birth to a second son, the duke of Anjou (afterwards of Orleans), at Saint Germain ; but she lived on very indifferent terms with her husband, who always retained his resentment against her, and, as he found his end approaching, expressed the greatest repugnance towards leaving the regency in her hands. He even banished his confessor Sirmond for having proposed to him to confer that dignity upon the queen. Of all the wounds which he declared he had suffered at the hand of Anne of Austria, that which affected him most was the part she had taken in the affair of Chalais ; he always reproached her with having desired his death, and when, seeing her husband about

to descend into the tomb, the queen entreated him to discard that odious idea, he remarked to Chavigni, “Dans l’état où je suis, je dois lui pardonner, mais je ne suis pas obligé de la croire.”

With this prejudice, added to subsequent intrigues which he believed she had been concerned in, the persuasion that she was incapable of governing, and her attachment to Spain, it is not surprising that Louis XIII. was desirous of excluding Anne of Austria from the regency; but he sought in vain for a substitute, having no greater esteem for his brother than for his wife, both of whom he had been led by his minister to dislike. He enumerated Gaston’s faults, amongst which he charged him with ingratitude and treason, and concluded by declaring him unfit for any appointment in the kingdom, above all the regency. This withering declaration was registered a few days after Louis’s death.

Necessity at length obliged him to act in opposition to his wishes. Richelieu was no longer alive to consult; and in 1642 Anne of Austria was named regent and the duke of Orleans lieutenant-general of the kingdom; but neither of them could perform any important act without the concurrence of a sovereign council, which he created, and prohibited them from changing. This council was composed of cardinal Mazarin, and Messieurs Seguier,

de Bouthilier, and de Chavigni, with the prince of Condé at their head.

After making his wife and brother swear to abide by his wishes, he signed the decree, and wrote beneath it with his own hand, "*Ce qui est dessus est ma très expresse et dernière volonté, que je voux être exécutée.*" A month after, Louis breathed his last sigh, little regretted in death, as he had been little loved in life.

He had taken every precaution to limit the power of his wife, who from the time the decree was made had incessantly thought about the best means of setting aside the restriction of her power which had been instituted by the dying king, who had scarcely passed from the world before his widow arrived with a brilliant escort, made her triumphal entry into Paris, and immediately repaired to the house of Parliament to procure the abrogation of the king's will.

The prince of Condé yielded his power at the instigation of his wife, who was the queen's intimate friend, upon the promise of superior advantages. To induce Seguier and others to abandon their power, Anne of Austria offered them the same authority under another title; as for the duke of Orleans, she possessed sufficient influence over him to lead him as she liked: accordingly, in the year 1643, in presence of the young king Louis XIV., the duke of Orleans, and the peers of France,

Anne of Austria was declared regent of the kingdom and guardian of her son without restriction, and at liberty to form her council by her own will ; and thus Louis XIII.'s *très expresse et dernière volonté* was respected !

The queen's next act was to recall those friends who had been exiled, amongst whom were the duchess de Chevreuse and the marquis de Châteauneuf, both of whom the late king had prohibited from ever reappearing at court. She also recalled Clara de Hautefort, who was exiled by Richelieu in 1637, on suspicion of having, in order to serve the queen, transmitted to her secretary Laporte, at the Bastille, the replies he was to make to his examiners, at the period when the queen was accused of conspiring with the Spaniards. As Clara's generosity deserved better treatment, the king was universally blamed for suffering her banishment to take place ; but she suffered with resignation, and retired at first to a convent, but, not finding a monastical life agreeable, she quitted it for the country. The queen had never forgotten the services which Clara had rendered her during the cardinal's life, and penned with her own hand these words : " Venez, ma chère amie ; je meurs d'impatience de vous embrasser." She also sent her own carriage to fetch Mademoiselle de Hautefort, and reinstated her in her former situation of *dame d'atours*.

Some time after, Clara, whose morality was rigidly

strict, and who was desirous of saving the reputation of her mistress, ventured to make some observations to her respecting the attachment she manifested for Mazarin, and the power she placed in his hands ; but Anne, though kind hearted and of an obliging disposition, would not suffer her most familiar friends to direct her. Having become mistress of herself, and at liberty to follow her own tastes, she declared firmly that she would not be restrained in her choice of confidants, nor exposed to remonstrances or criticisms. Mademoiselle de Hautefort, who had known her only under oppression, was unprepared for such a reprimand, and she found, too late, that her remarks were so unwelcome to the queen, that she was again exiled in 1644, and never forgiven.

Being then only thirty years of age, and enjoying an unsullied reputation, Clara de Hautefort was asked in marriage by Charles de Schomberg, duke of Halluyn, Marshal of France, to whom she was united in the year 1646. At the expiration of ten years, having had the misfortune to lose her husband, with whom she had lived happily, she resolved on spending the remainder of her life in retirement ; but her character for wisdom and virtue was so universally admitted, that Louis XIV. wrote her two successive letters, one dated from Valenciennes, and the other from Versailles, requesting her to accept the title and office of dame d'honneur to the queen Maria

Thérèse : “ Afin de remettre à la cour la dignité et la grandeur qu’on commençait à n’y plus voir.” Madame Schomberg thanked the king, but refused his offer on account of her advanced age. She afterwards retired to the convent of La Madeleine du Trainel, at Paris, where she lived universally esteemed, and died much regretted in 1691, aged seventy-five years. She left no family.

The queen, whose stormy regency proved so great a calamity for France, assumed little appearance of regret at the loss of her husband, and even during the period of mourning constantly frequented the theatre, of which she was passionately fond. The curate of Saint Germain l’Auxerrois vainly observed to her the impropriety of such unseasonable recreation ; but her more complaisant courtiers were of a contrary opinion, and the queen preferred their advice, as according better with her own inclinations. Nevertheless, when at St. Germain she led a very regular life, and even appointed fixed hours for her walks and drives, but she never rose before noon. She also observed her religious duties with rigorous exactitude.

Anne of Austria at first displayed some antipathy for Cardinal Mazarin, because he was one of those who wisely counselled the king to limit the power of the regent ; she carried her resentment on account of that advice so far

as to nominate her almoner, Auguste Potier, bishop of Beauvais, prime minister, although he was indolent, inexperienced, and in every respect incapable of conducting the affairs of state.

But Mazarin, whom Louis XIII. had chosen as godfather to the dauphin, by his persuasive and skilful manners soon gained an entire empire over the mind of Anne of Austria, who had so high an opinion of his sagacity and talents, that she considered him alone capable of supplying her own insufficiency; moreover, she was aware that he held the key of foreign affairs, and he therefore replaced Potier in the ministry. His influence was such, that to satisfy him she even sacrificed two of her most intimate friends—the duchess of Chevreuse and Montbazon, who were exiled.

The commencement of Anne's regency was exceedingly brilliant in consequence of the victories gained by the prince of Condé, particularly that of the battle of Rocroy in 1646. But these fair days did not last long. Mazarin was hated because he knew not how to attract either esteem or confidence, which are the pivots of government; he burdened the nation with taxes, and the numerous court intrigues caused the queen to multiply the odious *lettres de cachet*. This excess of evil roused the turbulent spirits, who excited the people to revolt against the government of a Spanish queen and

an Italian cardinal; the parliament declined to register their vexatious edicts, and remonstrated with the regent, who refused to heed them. The murmurs against her were incessant, for her reputation was not only sullied with suspicions injurious to her honour, but she was openly blamed for placing all her confidence in a foreigner who could hardly speak the language of the country he attempted to govern.

Thus Anne provoked an insurrection, which broke out upon the cardinal imprisoning three of the most popular of the councillors. Such was the origin of the Fronde, which commenced in 1648. The streets of Paris were barricaded, and the outraged people with furious cries demanded the liberation of the prisoners Broussel, Charton, and Potier de Blanc Menit. Mazarin trembled for the consequences of this revolt; but the queen, more courageous, shut herself in the Palais Royal, which she inhabited with the young king, and sent a regiment of Swiss and French guards to put down the rebels. The coadjutor Retz, who was an instigator of the rebellion, appeared in the queen's presence dressed in his pontifical robes, and informed her that the sedition was caused by the detention of the parliamentary councillors. "C'est être soi-même coupable de rebellion," replied Anne of Austria courageously, "que de croire qu'on puisse se révolter contre le roi; vous vou-

driez que je donasse la liberté à Broussel, mais je l'étranglerai plutôt de mes deux mains."

Mazarin, who attempted to address some words of peace to the people, was received with a shower of stones, and the queen who energetically sustained the power of which she had made so bad a use, declared that she would never open the gates of the prisoners until the people had thrown down their arms and dispersed; they accordingly yielded to her will, and Broussel, who was set at liberty, triumphantly re-entered Paris in one of the royal carriages.

Nevertheless the storm continued gradually to increase; many noblemen of the court embraced the party of the Fronde and determined on the dismissal of Mazarin; and Anne, who obstinately insisted on retaining her favourite minister in opposition to all France, was obliged in 1649 to leave Paris furtively in the middle of the night, and retire to Saint Germain with the young king, who was then ten years of age. She was accompanied by the duke of Orleans, the prince of Condé, and all the royal family, as also the author of the evil, Cardinal Mazarin, with whom she was living on terms of the greatest intimacy, and whom the antiquarian Dulaure asserts that she secretly married.

The court fled so precipitately from Paris, that they found themselves, in the middle of a severe winter, with-

out furniture, clothes, or provisions, and exposed to the greatest privations ; so that those who were not, like the queen and the cardinal, sustained by anger and the hope of vengeance, earnestly desired peace before the war had commenced. The regent's measures were so badly arranged, that in leaving Paris she did not even think of securing to herself the Bastille, which could have kept the town in order, but left it occupied by twenty-two thousand soldiers, who were without bread or ammunition, under the command of Tremblay, brother of the celebrated Father Joseph : that fortress was accordingly taken. The irritated queen at length resolved to blockade Paris, hoping to bring the people to submission by famine. The parliament sent a deputation, but she refused to receive it, replying that on the day following the town would be besieged by twenty-five thousand men.

At this period the English parliament, under Oliver Cromwell, decapitated their sovereign, Charles I. ; and his widow, who was daughter of Henry the Great, fled with her daughter to Paris, where they lived in a state of the most profound misery, wanting even fuel during the severity of the winter. The appearance of her sister-in-law in this desolate state was a grave lesson for the queen, who, with Mazarin, endeavoured to win over the heads of the revolt by promising a cardinal's hat to one, a government to another, and money to several ; and after

a slight combat at the Porte Saint-Antoine, Condé and his troops entered Paris : the king offered an entire amnesty, and the Frondeurs dispersed.

Four months after these events the court returned to Paris, and such was the volatile nature of the people, that they displayed the most lively signs of rejoicing on the queen's entry into the capital, and even kissed her robe, although Mazarin was at her side.

The days which followed were too bright and peaceful to last in those times of agitation, and various court intrigues determined the arrest and imprisonment of the duke of Longueville and the prince of Condé, who, twelve months before, had so successfully defended the regent. The news of this arrest again threw France into confusion : the parliament claimed their liberation ; the discontented reunited against Mazarin, who fled from Paris ; and the queen, made prisoner in the Palais Royal, was obliged to set the princes at liberty, and give an unwilling dismissal to her favourite minister. She vainly endeavoured to hasten a second time from Paris under favour of night, but all the doors and avenues of the palace were guarded, and several of the people, who feared that the king had been privately removed from the town, demanded the satisfaction of seeing him. The queen accordingly opened the doors of his sleeping apartment, and the crowd entered, but, imposing silence and the cir-

cumspection of respect on one another, they gazed with a kind of avidity on their young sovereign, whose youthful graces were embellished by the calm of a profound sleep.

Anne could not live happily without the cardinal, and by unwearied exertions obtained his recall, but it was to her own disadvantage; for, with the view of maintaining his influence at court when the majority of Louis would place the reins of government in his hands, he paid homage to the young king, and endeavoured to create a difference between him and his mother; and from that period, 1651, Mazarin absorbed all public authority, and preserved it until his death. It was, no doubt, this ungrateful conduct that, in some measure, caused Anne of Austria to reject the thought of Louis XIV.'s marriage with Marie Mancini, the cardinal's niece, with so much indignation: "*Si le roi faisait un tel mariage,*" she said with her usual energy to the ambitious prelate, "*je m'unirais à la France contre mon fils, et contre vous.*"

In 1654 she dismissed Marie Mancini from court and negotiated Louis XIV.'s marriage with her niece, Maria Thérèse, the Infanta of Spain. France was weary of the long war with Spain, and this union, which was concluded in 1659 by the preliminaries of the treaty of the Pyrenees, was the token of peace. After the king's marriage, Anne of Austria retired from public affairs.

In 1661 she learned the death of Mazarin, for whom she had compromised her crown and her dignity, but his loss gave her little pain.

Religious duties occupied the latter years of this once restless spirit. Louis XIV., who entertained profound sentiments of respect for social duties, received his mother's counsel upon all occasions with the greatest deference, notwithstanding she never spared her reproofs on the subject of his neglect of his queen and his public acts of infidelity.

For the space of three years she bore the seeds of death in her bosom in the form of a cancer, and during the last eighteen months of her life this devouring malady almost caused her more cruel sufferings than her courage was equal to sustain. This princess was singularly delicate in all that concerned the care of her person ; it was difficult to find cambric or lawn sufficiently fine for her use, so that Cardinal Mazarin jocosely remarked that "*En purgatoire sa punition serait de coucher dans des draps de toile d'Hollande.*"

Anne of Austria experienced many vicissitudes in her life ; at one time tormented and mortified by an imperious minister, and an object of compassion to the people, and at another outraged and rebelled against by those very people. Notwithstanding her attachment to Spain, she made war against that country as if she had never

loved it ; and in her retirement her domestic virtues were such, that she had the satisfaction of seeing the nation do justice to her estimable qualities.

In her malady she offered a terrible example of the fragility of human grandeur and personal charms, which she often remarked herself to the ladies in attendance on her, looking with compassion on her hands and arms, once so beautiful and much admired. Her greatest consolation was to be surrounded by her family, and, equally occupied in procuring and doing good without interfering with the government, her last days were passed in the calm of virtue.

During her illness she displayed the greatest patience ; those who approached her were only aware of her agony by her involuntary movements, and her countenance wore the smile of benevolence to the last. The king, queen, duke of Anjou, and Madame Henriette were constantly at her side, and with her last breath she was anxious to let them know how agreeable was their care and assiduity, and how much she was consoled by their tears.

The king regretted her sincerely, for she had failed in no point of maternal affection. Notwithstanding the embarrassment which civil war constantly occasioned her during her son's infancy, she presided over his education, assisted in instructing him, and assiduously avoided his

forming an acquaintance with any person from whom he could acquire vicious habits. In inspiring him with noble and elevated sentiments, she endeavoured to prevent his being dazzled by the brilliancy of the crown, and engraved on his heart a sincere respect for religion, which he always revered, even when far from acting according to its principles.

It has been asserted that, by the counsel of a fanatical confessor, when dying she petitioned Louis XIV. for the revocation of the edict of Nantes, which guaranteed protection to the Protestants. If there be any foundation for this assertion, the name of Anne of Austria must have been hateful to the French even after her death.

Daughter, wife, sister, and mother of kings, she possessed all the dignity which belonged to her elevated rank ; she was proud, but her manner was exquisitely polished, so that the marquis de la Fare mentions her epoch as that of the purest gallantry.

Anne was a great admirer of the fine arts ; the works which she executed were, the entire restoration of Val-de-Grace, and the dome. Before the birth of Louis XIV., an Augustine monk having predicted that she would have a son, she made a vow to construct a chapel to Notre Dame de Savone. She had not, however, the time to fulfil her intentions, and Louis XIV. accom-

plished her vow. This queen both loved and encouraged literature. An author having asked her protection to enable him to publish some historical memoirs of that period without danger, "*Ne craignez rien,*" she said; "*je protégerai toujours la vérité.*"

Her blind attachment to Mazarin is the greatest stain in her government, although she displayed eminent courage in maintaining her adherence to him. Louis XIV. said that his mother, as regent, should be ranked among the greatest kings of the earth; but less partial posterity has not ratified his judgment, for her good qualities were not so numerous as to obliterate the memory of her faults. She expired in 1666, at the age of sixty-five years, and was entombed at St. Denis.

QUEEN MARIA THERESA.

(Reign of Louis XIV.)

MARIA THERESA was the only daughter of Philip IV., king of Spain, and of Elizabeth of France, sister to Louis XIII., and niece of Anne of Austria. She was born at the Escorial in 1638, five days after Louis XIV.

Although endowed with many personal as well as moral advantages, and the issue of blood royal, this

princess passed her life in comparative obscurity. Modest and retiring, she had no ambitious views, and was an entire stranger to political affairs. Gentle, virtuous, and an enemy to intrigue, she spared no efforts to gain the king's affection, but was fortunate enough only to obtain his esteem and friendship.

Louis XIV.'s mother had constantly overlooked his conduct, and, to prevent temptation, did not suffer him to associate with any women of an equivocal reputation. Happy would it have been could she have succeeded in moderating those unruly passions that led him into disorders, which history, the protectress of morality, cannot disguise. The young king, escaping from her surveillance, first professed a predilection for Madame de Beauvais, duchess of Châtillon, who was thirty-three years older than himself. This lady was consequently dismissed from court by the queen-mother, but through her address was soon recalled, and always possessed great influence with Louis. She spent the last years of her life upon her own estate of Gentilly, which had been given to her by him, and died there in 1687. Her daughter, a model of all the virtues, was the duchess of Richelieu, the particular friend of Maria Theresa.

Mazarin, whose views were exceedingly ambitious, sent to Italy for his five nieces, who were like himself, of noble family, and all very beautiful. They were the

daughters of his sister Geronima Mazarini, and Laurent Mancini, a Roman baron. The eldest, Saura Vittoria, was married in 1651 to the duke of Mercœur, son of the duke of Vendôme and grandson of Henry the Great; the fourth was united to the duke of Bouillon; and the fifth, Hortense, was the wife of the duke of Meilleraie. Olympia, the second sister, was the first to whom Louis was attached, in 1654. She was of the same age as himself, and is described as having been a perfect beauty; her voice was melodious, her language seducing, and the gentleness of her disposition gained her the love of all hearts.

The queen-mother, perceiving the attachment that existed between the young king and Olympia Mancini, endeavoured to break the liaison by proposing a union for her with Eugene Maurice of Savoy, count de Soissons, to whom she was married in 1657. This separation cost some tears to the young lovers; but Louis, having been attacked with a dangerous illness at Calais, felt hurt at the indifference displayed by the countess de Soissons, and from that time his affection was transferred from her to her younger sister, Marie Mancini; nevertheless Olympia enjoyed that intimacy with the sovereign which results from an acquaintance formed in childhood. She resided at court in the quality of superintendent to the queen's household, which office the Car-

dinal Mazarin created expressly for her. Nothing surpassed the luxury of her apartments, her carriages, and her attendants. She lost immense sums at play, for the king never gave her less than two thousand louis at a time. She resided in the Tuileries, and was the centre of attraction at court, which, like her uncle Mazarin, she ruled over by her art and address. It was in her saloons that Louis XIV. acquired those polished manners for which he was so much admired.

In 1665 the countess de Soissons was exiled, having, either through hatred or jealousy, informed Maria Theresa of the king's attachment to Mademoiselle de la Vallière. She, however, returned to court some time after, from whence she was obliged to fly upon a new charge, having been accused of participating in several acts of poisoning, more especially that of her husband; she accordingly retired to Spain. The young queen of that country ardently desired to see the countess of Soissons, notwithstanding the opposition of her husband, who urged her not to drink anything in the presence of that lady, unless it had been previously tasted by one of her devoted servants. This precaution was either neglected or paralyzed, and the unfortunate queen died from the effects of poison, after having drunk some milk which was presented to her by the countess de Soissons. The king immediately sent to arrest her, but she had

already disappeared, and directed her flight towards Germany. This evasion is the only argument which can be adduced in support of the accusation, as the interest she could have had in committing such a crime is unknown, or at least doubtful.

The countess de Soissons died at Brussels, greatly impoverished and little esteemed, in the year 1707; she was the mother of five princes, amongst whom was the commander so celebrated under the name of Prince Eugene.

During the dangerous illness with which the king was attacked at Calais, Marie Mancini manifested great anxiety for his recovery. Although not so beautiful as either of her sisters, she possessed the charm of an amiable disposition; moreover she loved Louis with a frankness and sincerity which he recompensed by the lively interest he felt for her. Marie was exceedingly clever, and exhibited as much talent in the compilation of a dispatch as in the composition of poetry, for which she obtained some little celebrity.

On his recovery, Louis became tenderly attached to his former playmate, and from that time never appeared in public unaccompanied by her; she even followed him into the apartments of Anne of Austria, who vainly expressed the discontent which the presence of his mistress caused her.

Louis more than once hinted his intention of marrying her, and Mazarin, by way of discovering the queen-mother's ideas on the subject, one day said to her, "*Je crains bien que le roi ne veuille trop fortement épouser ma nièce;*" and it was upon that occasion that she ordered him to break that engagement under pain of incurring her displeasure, and the revolt of all France against him.

In consequence of this declaration, the cardinal, who knew the firmness of her resolution, renounced the brilliant illusion of obtaining a crown for one of his family, and afterwards earnestly endeavoured to persuade the king to forego an attachment which was both prejudicial to his glory and his interests, and seriously occupied himself with negotiating a suitable marriage with a foreign princess.

The queen-mother and the cardinal differed in their choice, which was divided between Maria Theresa and Margaret of Savoy. Anne desired the Infanta, for the double advantage of having a daughter-in-law of her own blood, and peace with Spain. Mazarin's choice inclined towards the princess of Savoy, for having already married one of his nieces to the count of Soissons, cousin to the duke of Savoy, and no longer daring to flatter himself with the hope of placing Marie Mancini upon the throne, he thought that at least he would endeavour

to raise his relative to that honour by marrying the princess Margaret to the king. Accordingly he sent to invite the duke of Savoy and his daughter Margaret to meet the court at Lyon. At the same time, Spain, who had projected a union with France, sent an ambassador (Antonio Pimentello) to Lyon, to offer the Infanta Maria Theresa.

The queen-mother undertook to explain to the princess of Savoy the motives for preferring an alliance with Spain, and the contract for Louis's marriage with the Infanta was entered into and signed in 1659.

Marie Mancini was desirous of accompanying the court to Lyon, but the will of the queen-mother was predominant on this occasion; moreover, the cardinal wished her to discard hopes that could never be realized, and therefore sent her to a convent at Brouage. The separation of the young lovers was affecting, and the monarch could not restrain his tears. "Ah, sire," said Marie, tenderly, "*vous pleurez : vous êtes roi, et je pars.*" After her departure the king threw himself at his mother's feet to obtain her consent to his marriage with his favourite, thus offering to sacrifice the interests of an alliance with Spain, and cursing the weight of his crown, which exposed him to greater slavery than the lowest peasant in his kingdom. His pathetic appeal almost induced Anne to accede to his wishes; the two young lovers

were re-united at Saint-Jean-d'Angeli, and Marie Mancini had already one foot on the throne, when, recovering her natural energy, the queen-mother prepared a fulminating address to the nation: moreover, the Infanta of Spain was approaching the frontiers; was she to receive a mortifying affront, and thus renew the war which her presence in France would conclude? Louis showed himself worthy of the rank he occupied, and the sacrifice was completed in 1660.

The king of France, accompanied by Turenne, met the king of Spain on the frontiers, in the Isle of Conference, and the marriage was celebrated with great pomp at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, by the bishop of Bayonne. During the ceremony the *dame d'atours*, Madame de Noailles, supported the crown upon the queen's head.

The king and his royal consort repaired to Vincennes, in order to give the Parisians time to make preparations for a magnificent entry into the capital, which took place by the Barrière du Trône. On this occasion the nobility and the bourgeoisie rivalled each other in the luxury of their dresses and equipages. Gold and precious stones sparkled on all sides: "Tel qui de deux moulins ne fit qu'un habit." Seventy mules ornamented with gold trappings formed a part of Mazarin's cortège; and his house was so sumptuously ornamented, with even more than royal pomp, that *Monsieur*, who could not entirely

excuse it, ironically termed it *fasteuse simplicité*. The youth and beauty of the young couple, and the immense concourse of people, augmented the brilliancy of the fête. Madame de Maintenon (then Madame Scarron), who was among the crowd, in writing a description of it to one of her friends, remarked that for twelve hours she was all ears and eyes; that she could not have believed or imagined a sight so beautiful; and, added she, "The queen ought to be very happy and contented with the husband she has chosen."

The king's marriage did not immediately lessen his sentiments of affection for Marie Mancini, who struggled to overcome her attachment. But the queen-mother, who was uneasy at the thought of her remaining at court, resolved to marry her to a foreigner in order to remove her from France. She succeeded in effecting a union between her and the grand constable of Naples, Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, in 1661. The ceremony took place at the Louvre, one month after the death of Mazarin: Louis loaded his beloved mistress with presents, and she was conducted to Italy by her husband.

At Rome she met her sister Hortensia, duchess of Meilleraie, and this sister bestowed very bad counsel on her, for they both quitted their husbands, and, disguised in men's dresses, embarked at Cività Vecchia for Provence, in order to meet their lovers, the count de Marsau,

and the chevalier de Lorraine, the same who was suspected of having poisoned Madame Henrietta, wife of Philip duke of Orleans, and sister-in-law to Louis XIV. The grand constable having sent a trusty friend to Maria at Marseilles, requesting her to return to him, she replied only by a letter, and continued her journey under the same disguise; accordingly she was arrested at Aix in 1670, and confined by her husband in the château of Segovie, but by order of Louis was moved to the abbey of Lys, from whence she escaped to Germany in 1673.

Having become the object of well-merited sarcasms, Maria implored the grand constable's pardon, and this too indulgent husband obtained from the pope "*une excommunication contre ceux qui parleraient mal de Madame la Connétable.*" Moreover, he had been recently appointed viceroy of Arragon, and she was desirous of sharing that brilliant position. But, far from being received as she expected, her scandalous conduct caused her to be slighted and avoided; she again left her husband's dwelling, and continued to lead a wandering life, until, her divorce having been pronounced, she retired to a convent in Madrid, where she died, in 1715, aged seventy years. She had two sons, one of whom succeeded his father as grand constable of Naples, the other was Cardinal Colonna. Maria Mancini has left a

treatise on meteorological events, and memoirs of her own private life.

For some months the young queen was the only object of Louis's attentions, during which time she occupied the first rank, which a little later was bestowed on his favourite; for, instead of submitting to the royal forms and the fatigues which accompany royalty, Maria Theresa preferred living more calmly and retiredly. In 1661 she gave birth to a daughter, and afterwards was attacked with the measles, during which malady the king attended her himself so assiduously, that he contracted the disease.

Notwithstanding these marks of tenderness, the queen-mother had remarked that Madame Henrietta and the king partook of an affection, in which Monsieur suffered in his dignity as husband. At all the entertainments and carousals, Louis was the cavalier of Henrietta; at all the balls they danced together; in all Benserade's ballads there were allusions to them which none could misunderstand—the king was the lily, the duchess of Orleans the rose.

Madame Henrietta, daughter of the unfortunate Charles I. of England, the princess whose life, or rather whose death, has immortalized Bossuet, although at that time only seventeen years of age, bore that beautiful and fatal impress of sadness which characterized the coun-

tenances of all the Stuarts. Her form was fragile and delicate ; she had her great-grandmother Mary Stuart's swan-like throat, which was of such pure transparency, that a modern author has remarked, "Qu'on eût pu voir à travers couler le poison du Chevalier de Lorraine."

Anne of Austria, who saw with anxiety Louis's attentions to his sister-in-law, judged it time to put an end to them, and accordingly endeavoured to cure one passion by inspiring another ; she therefore in some measure encouraged him in a predilection he had formed for Mademoiselle de la Vallière, judging that from her humble position, and simple and retiring manners, no positive evil could accrue.

Louise Frances de la Beaume-Leblanc, duchess de la Vallière and de Vaujour, was daughter of the marquis de la Vallière, and born at Amboise, of which place her father was governor, in 1644. Her mother having on her third marriage united herself with the marquis de Saint Remi, first *maître d'hôtel* to the duke of Orleans, Mademoiselle de la Vallière was brought up in the Palais Royal, and appointed maid of honour to Madame Henrietta, duchess of Orleans, in 1661.

Her function in that office frequently brought her into the society of the king. Simple and lively, she conceived an attachment the consequences of which she did not calculate, as she beheld in him a handsome and in-

teresting young man whom in his exalted position she might freely admire. Her manners were modest and even timid ; she spoke little, read much. Her face is so well known, that a description of it is almost unnecessary ; it has been described as that of the Christian Venus of France. Her eyes, blue as the virgin martyr's, and fringed with light silken lids, were seldom seen ; her smile was gracious and closed ; although her mouth was large, those who loved her admired it—but her rivals, and Bussy, the echo of all jealousy, attribute it to the irregularity of her teeth ; her form was slight, but elegant and flexible ; and her countenance expressed all that was amiable, notwithstanding her natural reserve : but she was marked with the small pox. The defect in her gait was scarcely perceptible ; a modern author, in remarking this imperfection, likens her to “a beautiful swan wounded.” Madame de Sevigné calls Mademoiselle de la Vallière “*l'humble violette, si touchante, si intéressante, si tendre, et si honteuse de l'être.*”

It is so rare for a prince to be loved truly, and for himself alone, that Louis, who was sensible of her sincere attachment, grew exceedingly fond of her, and made known his passion to her at the château of Saint Germain in 1661. For some time Louisa remonstrated with him, and struggled with her own heart. She refused at first to receive him, and, in order to visit her, he was

obliged to climb to the roof of the house clandestinely, and enter the window of Mademoiselle d'Artigny's apartment, which adjoined hers; but the lady who superintended the charge of the maids of honour discovered this stratagem, and had bars placed at the windows of all their apartments.

It was at this period that Fouquet, the superintendent of finances, presuming to become the rival of his royal master, made professions to Mademoiselle de la Vallière, and offered to settle two hundred thousand livres on her, which she refused with disdain. Louis was made acquainted with his pretensions at a fête which the superintendent gave to him at his château at Vaux, and which was so "*outrageusement superbe*," that the king could not dissemble his surprise and discontent at the immoderate luxury which was displayed. Historical memoirs afford a description of the dress Mademoiselle de la Vallière wore on that day. Her robe of white tissue was embroidered with gold stars and leaves, the boddice pointed and laced with fine golden cord; her ceinture was of palest blue, fastened in front with a large knot. Her fair hair, which waved in loose curls upon her delicate shoulders, was intermixed with pearls and flowers without confusion; two large emeralds glittered at her ears; her fragile arms were bare, and encircled below the elbow with bracelets of golden fret-work; and her gloves, of white Brussels

lace, were of such delicate fabric, that her hands wore the colour of the blush-rose beneath their transparency.

It is said that, on being informed of Fouquet's admiration for Mademoiselle de la Vallière, and also on seeing a portrait of that lady in his sleeping apartment at Vaux, the king became so exasperated that he would have arrested the superintendent in his own palace, in the midst of his magnificent entertainment, if the queen-mother had not dissuaded him. His scandalous luxury, extravagance, and waste of the money belonging to the revenue, were the pretext for his disgrace, but there is little doubt that his presumption with regard to the royal favourite was the principal cause.

Knowing that Maria Theresa especially favoured all those who understood the Spanish language, Louisa de la Vallière diligently studied it, and was admitted into her circle before she had been queen of France twelve months. These occasions of meeting her royal lover rendered her situation more difficult, and hastened her defeat. Some jealous persons, amongst whom was the Countess de Soissons, informed the good queen of her husband's attachment, and Maria Theresa complained to the king, who imposed silence on her. Obligated patiently to submit to her griefs, the unhappy queen opened her heart to her beloved friend Anne of Austria, who never ceased to reproach her son for his neglect of his amiable

young wife. She also granted her request, which arose from legitimate sorrow, to refuse any future intimacy with Mademoiselle de la Vallière.

The king, who was wearied with this surveillance, took great pleasure in conducting his beloved mistress, far from etiquette and jealousy, to Versailles, which was then an inelegant little château in the middle of a wood, with nothing in the neighbourhood but a small tavern and a mill. He afterwards ornamented and magnificently furnished her a residence (the Hôtel Biron at Paris), and in 1662 gave most brilliant carousals in her honour in the place which still bears that name. His crown was ornamented with a half-blown rown rose, the emblem of his modest favourite, and his devise was, "*Quanto si mostra men, tanto è più bella.*"

Unaspiring in the midst of all her grandeur, which sometimes seemed to overpower her, she interfered in no state affairs, and was a stranger to political intrigue. She concealed the result of her criminality with the most scrupulous care, so that the court was almost ignorant of the birth of Marie-Anne de Bourbon (Mademoiselle de Blois) and the count de Vermandois. Mademoiselle de Vallière had also two other children, who died young.

Notwithstanding all the king's tenderness for her, she was not happy; she loved him devotedly, but she wept

for her fault ; moreover, she was sincerely grieved at the thought of the queen's domestic sorrows, for which she blamed herself, and she hesitated between her love and her duty ; at length, after a painful struggle with her heart, she retired to the convent of the Benedictines of Saint Cloud.

At the time Louis was informed of her flight he was engaged with a council of his ministers ; he however quitted them abruptly, and, after having assisted in saddling a horse, repaired to Saint Cloud with the rapidity of lightning, penetrated into the sacred asylum, and, in opposition to the tears and resistance of his mistress, carried her away from amongst the stupified nuns. He was ready, according to the duke of Saint Simon, to set fire to the convent if they had refused to give him admittance.

This affair gave Mademoiselle de la Vallière the character of a declared mistress, although she never made use of her influence as such. But the monarch, having heard that she had a brother who was an officer in one of his regiments of infantry, loaded him with favours. This young man was father to the first duke de la Vallière.

In 1666 Mademoiselle de la Vallière was dangerously ill when giving birth to Marie-Anne de Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Blois, at Vincennes, which caused the king

so much anxiety, that he was seriously indisposed in consequence; on his recovery he bestowed on her the title of duchess, desired that she should be called *Madame*, and presented her with the territories of Vanjour. The letters patent which confer these favours contain the following preamble: “Louis, par la grâce de Dieu, Roi de France et de Navarre &c.: les bienfaits que les rois exercent dans leurs états étant la marque extérieure du mérite de ceux qui les reçoivent, et le plus glorieux éloge des sujets qui en sont honorés, nous avons cru ne pouvoir mieux exprimer dans le public l’estime toute particulière que nous faisons de la personne de nôtre très-chère, bien-aimée, et très-féale, Louise-Françoise de la Vallière, qu’en lui conférant les plus hauts titres d’honneur qu’une affection tres-singulière, excitée dans notre cœur par une infinité de rares perfections, nous a inspirés depuis quelques années en sa faveur; et quoique sa modestie se soit souvent opposée au désir que nous avons de l’élever plus tôt dans un rang proportionné à notre estime et à ses bonnes qualités, néanmoins, l’affection que nous avons pour elle, et la justice ne nous permettent plus de déferer les témoignages de notre reconnaissance à ces causes . . . :” &c.

By the same letters Mademoiselle de Blois was pronounced legitimate, and this distinction was also

accorded to Mademoiselle de la Vallière's second child, Louis de Bourbon, count of Vermandois. She accepted the rank and title of duchess, solely in obedience to her lover, and out of tenderness for her children, who were educated under her own superintendence.

The birth of two other children, who died in their infancy, made cruel ravages on her personal appearance; the carnation disappeared from her cheeks, she grew excessively thin, and became but the shadow of her former self. The king perceived the change, which some, who were ambitious of supplanting her, did not fail to comment upon in his presence; but habit, and a delicate sentiment of affection and esteem which he always retained for her, sustained his love for some time. While she still believed herself the object of tenderness to her lover, a rival was secretly robbing her of his heart, the sole good that she estimated. This rival was Françoise Athenais de Rochechourant de Mortemar, daughter of the duke of that name, and governor of Paris; she was born in 1641, and the descendant of a family equally celebrated for their noble and ancient rank as for their wit and intellectual acquirements, which were so remarkable, that "*l'esprit d'un Mortemar*" was a common expression at court. The accuracy of her ideas, her ingenuity at repartee, and the eloquent

facility with which she conversed, rendered her a most agreeable companion.

In 1663 she was married to Henri-Louis de Par-
daillon de Goudrin, Marquis of Montespan, and appeared
at court in all the attraction of youth and beauty, joined
to great love of coquetry. Her features were regular,
her form and deportment majestic, her manners elegant,
and these charms were heightened by an intellectual and
brilliant flow of wit, that Louis could not fail to be daz-
zled with. She was also so skilful as to give the queen
a high opinion of her virtue, by a strict attendance to
her religious duties, so that she easily blinded that good
but too credulous princess. Moreover, she had the heart
to insinuate herself into the good graces of the duchess
de la Vallière, who, incapable of deceit or intrigue, was
also unsuspecting of it, and who, thinking that her
agreeable conversation gratified the king, took pleasure
in inviting her to her suppers, and even in adorning her
herself in every way that could render her more
attractive.

By her constant association with the duchess, the
ambitious marchioness became acquainted with the king's
character, inclinations, and tastes, and profited by this
advantage with profound art. The blindness of Louis
XIV.'s mistresses is somewhat remarkable, each having
introduced the one who supplanted her. The duchess de

la Vallière soon perceived that the friend she had so unsuspectingly brought into the society of her royal lover had become her rival, and that Louis could not repress his admiration for her. To gratify him, as the last effort of an ill-recompensed constancy, she redoubled her attentions to Madame de Montespan, and learned too late the king's predilection for her; from that moment the duchess de la Vallière resolved on the sacrifice of her liberty. In vain Louis's favourites and friends, the duke de Lauzan and the duke de Longueville, taking advantage of the king's neglect of her, made her offers of marriage; she rejected both, for she still loved the king with that sincere and ardent affection which she so soon after vowed to Heaven; moreover, Louis would not in all probability have permitted her to marry, for the duke of Saint Simon suspects him of entertaining this selfish and proud idea: "Qu'après avoir été à lui, il ne devait souffrir qu'elle fût être à personne qu'à Dieu;" and, says the same author, although he hesitated to pronounce the sacrifice, he saw the victim relinquish all and devote herself to a living tomb with satisfaction and even pleasure.

The following lines are attributed to the duchess de la Vallière by the duke de Saint Simon:—

“Tout se détruit, tout passe, et le cœur le plus tendre
Ne peut d'un même objet se contenter toujours;
Le passé n'a point vu d'éternelles amours,

Et les siècles futurs n'en doivent point attendre.
La constance a des lois qu'on ne veut point entendre ;
Des desseins d'un grand roi rien n'arrête le cours :
Ce qui plaît aujourd'hui déplaît en peu de jours ;
Son inégalité ne saurait se comprendre.
Tous ces défauts, grand roi, font tort à vos vertus ;
Vous m'aimiez autrefois, et vous ne m'aimez plus.
Ah ! que mes sentiments sont différens des vôtres !
Amour, à qui je dois mon mal et mon bien,
Que ne lui donnez vous un cœur comme le mien ;
Ou que n'avez vous fait le mien comme les autres ?”

After shedding many tears, the neglected favourite resolved to retire to the convent of Saint Marie de Chaillot. The king, who still entertained the greatest esteem and friendship for her, sent Colbert and Lauzan to bring her back to court, supposing that the former might have some influence over her, as he had the charge of her children, and the latter, because he was singularly gifted with the talent of persuasion. After some remonstrances they succeeded in persuading her to return ; but she remarked, with some bitterness, that on a former occasion the king went to fetch her himself.

The duchess felt the weight of her chains, although she could not hate them ; but she was miserable at court, not only on account of her lover's infidelity, but also because Madame de Montespan overwhelmed her with

every species of insolence, and is even said to have disposed the apartments of the château in such a manner that the king, in going to visit her, was obliged to pass through those of Madame de la Vallière. The love she could not uproot from her heart enabled her to support these griefs with patience; but the avowal of her dissatisfaction sometimes escaped her:—"Quand j'aurai de la peine aux Carmelites," she one day remarked to a friend, "je me souviendrai de ce que ces gens m'ont fait souffrir."

Nothing could shake the resolution she had formed to retire to a cloister, to which she was encouraged by the counsels of the virtuous duke of Beauvillière; and in a moment of generosity the king gave his permission, proposing to her to choose an order of which she could be the abbess, and enjoy all her dignities; but she modestly replied, that, having erred in her own conduct, she could not think of directing that of others.

Before quitting the court, Madame de la Vallière was desirous of obtaining pardon from the only person she had ever injured; bathed in tears of sincerest repentance, she threw herself at the feet of the virtuous sovereign Maria Theresa, who, generously forgetting the past, raised her modest rival, embraced her, and made vows for the repose of her remaining days.

On the 19th of April, 1674, she took leave of all the

court at Madame de Montespan's, where she supped with the king; the day following she attended mass with him in the queen's apartments, after which she repaired to the convent of the Carmelites in the Rue Saint Jacques, Faubourg Saint Germain.

In the following year, on her thirty-first birthday, she took the vows under the name of her sister Louise de la Miséricorde, in presence of the queen and all the court, upon which occasion Maria Theresa placed the veil upon the head of the new nun. She lived in the strictest exercises of religious devotion, gave all that she possessed to the poor, and frequently subjected herself to the most painful and rigorous penances. She wore iron bracelets and waistbands, and on more than one occasion fell down in the chapel faint and stiff, with cold, and long watching, and praying. Notwithstanding all these austerities, she lived thirty-six years in this seclusion, and died in the arms of her daughter, the princess of Conti, in the year 1710, at the age of sixty-five.

The duchess de la Vallière left one daughter, Marie-Anne de Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Blois, who was married to the prince de Conti; and Louis de Bourbon, count de Vermandois. After his mother's retirement, this young man's education was left to the charge of persons who were incapable of directing it, and he im-

bibed haughty and licentious habits, so that the king banished him his presence ; he, however, pardoned and received him again, but the young count met an early death, having been carried off by an ague in 1683, at the camp of Courtrai, during the siege. The king charged Bossuet, who delivered the discourse on the occasion of the duchess's profession, to prepare her for the death of her son. "Alas ! my God," said the penitent, prostrating herself before her crucifix, "must I weep for his death, before I have sufficiently bewailed his birth !"

After the retreat of the duchess de la Vallière, Louis XIV. gave way to his passion for Madame de Montespan, who felt herself unequal to contend against the seductions that surrounded her, and accordingly wrote to her husband to inform him of the king's sentiments for her, and entreated him to remove her from the court to his château at Guyenne ; he, however, did not heed her request, not because he was indifferent to her, but, on the contrary, because he was exceedingly attached, and for that reason was deaf to the energetic warnings of his wife, whom he imagined to be above all temptation.

A short time after, Louis gave a magnificent carousal in her honour, when the marquis de Montespan, discovering his error, proceeded to court, where he loaded the marchioness with invectives, presented himself to the

king in deep mourning, which was contrary to etiquette, and made so much disturbance respecting his conjugal disgrace, that he was first sent to the Bastille, and afterwards banished to Guyenne.

Madame de Montespan, who was publicly acknowledged as the king's mistress, lived in a style of extravagant pomp and magnificence, gave superb fêtes, eclipsed the queen by her luxury, and contracted enormous debts; in one night only she lost, in partnership with the king, four hundred thousand pistoles, and, determining to play until she had recovered it, continued to gamble until sunrise. Her grandeur contrasted strangely with the simplicity of her predecessor, and she declared that she would restore the brilliancy and privileges which appertained to the royal favourite, and which Madame de la Vallière had suffered to fall into oblivion. She received the ministers, and always appeared in public with the pomp and suite of a sovereign. At the carousals which the monarch gave in her honour, he wore her favourite colours, and on his crown a star composed of large diamonds surrounded by a multitude of smaller ones, with this device—"à la plus belle;" and in order to give her the honours which belong exclusively to privileged ladies, he named her, in 1667, superintendent of the queen's household. Maria Theresa, on being informed of this, exclaimed, "*Cette femme me fera mourir.*" The favour-

ite was not less dreaded by the ministers and generals, and the courtiers even avoided passing under her windows, declaring that they would not “*passer par les armes.*”

Madame de Montespan gave birth to the duke de Maine at the château of Saint Germain in 1670, and had several other children. She confided them to the care of Madame Scarron, a woman in every respect worthy of the choice; Madame de Montespan provided her with a house in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where she brought them up with all the tenderness and affection of a mother, and it was supposed by the inhabitants in the Faubourg that they were her own.

Her choice of such a governess proves the good judgment of Madame de Montespan, who constantly obtained favours and presents for her from the king with courageous perseverance; for, although Louis appreciated Madame Scarron's merits, he could with difficulty support her presence, having conceived an unconquerable dislike to her.

Nevertheless she experienced many vexations on account of Madame Scarron, and eventually had cause to reproach herself for not having dismissed her when the king urged her to do so; but, devoted to the interest of her children, the marchioness continued her regard for her, although she despised her haughty manners, and had

frequently angry discussions with her ; but the mother's love triumphed over the woman's griefs, and the governess was always loaded with kindness.

Madame de Montespan's prodigality deserves severe censure ; not content with a pension of a thousand louis a month, she contracted immense debts, which Louis was obliged to pay. Her superstitious devotion is also equally blameable ; she imagined that her irregularities could be atoned for by expiatory practices; and never omitted the abstinences prescribed by the church, but sometimes left her royal lover's society to perform penance in her oratory ; and thus intermingled religious practices with worldly diversions.

Madame de Montespan judiciously abstained from interfering in government affairs or political intrigues, and the fifteen years that she was mistress of Louis XIV. were the most brilliant and happy of his reign. But, always faithful to religion, though forgetting its precepts, the monarch frequently displayed alternatives of tenderness and repentance. Sometimes they mutually agreed to lead a more regular life, and would separate for a short space of time, after which remorse would be succeeded by fresh indulgences, and the scandal would recommence, so that the shame of so many relapses obliged her to conceal the birth of her two last children

from public knowledge, in order to avoid displeasing their father.

The queen was for some time ignorant of the existence of Louis's children by Madame de Montespan, but, having one day met two of them at Versailles, she caressed them with tears, saying, "Madame de Richelieu me tranquillisait toujours sur ce qui se passait : voilà réalité !"

At length Louis XIV., tired or discontented with Madame de Montespan, renewed his attentions to his virtuous wife, but it was only a dream of happiness for Maria Theresa ; for Madame de Montespan, perceiving the king's coldness, thought she would recover his affection by introducing to him a woman whom the Abbé Choisi represents as a "femme sans conséquence, belle comme l'amour, mais sotte comme un panier." This was Marie Angélique de Scoraille de Roussille, of an ancient family of Rouergue, where she was born in 1661. The duchess of Arpajou, who was astonished at the extreme beauty of this young lady, obtained her a situation as maid of honour to Madame Henriette. Although the court was remarkable for the beauties of which it was at that time composed, Mademoiselle de Roussille, who was then only sixteen years of age, outshone them all ; she was called the *brilliant Fontanges* ; but her physical advantages were all she possessed ; mind and intelligence were wanting.

Louis, who had often heard Madame de Montespan speak of "*la belle idole de marbre de province*," was at length curious to see her, and the favourite presented the young maid of honour in the becoming dress of the chase; he was enraptured with her, and this rising star soon eclipsed all others. Mademoiselle de Roussille on her part was easily won. Educated in a provincial château, and taught from her cradle that she was beautiful enough to be loved by a king, she believed that her destiny was accomplished. Young and thoughtless, she responded to the king's passion with affection, and even in the queen's presence. She rendered herself remarkable by the splendour of her jewelry, as also by the extraordinary style of her head-dress, which has preserved the name of *Fontanges*, the only memorial she has left posterity of her ephemeral reign. She broke through all rules of etiquette without shame, and also without discernment or discretion; frequently entered Maria Theresa's apartment, and addressed the king, without first speaking to the queen; and this freedom, improper as it was, pleased Louis, who was tired of court constraint.

On her eighteenth birthday he presented her with a superb house, and dignified her with the title of duchess of Fontanges. This favour, the enormous sum she received (three hundred thousand livres a month), the rich presents Louis made her in jewels and equipages, and the nomina-

tion of her sister to the abbey of Chelles, added to her own pride, created her numberless enemies at court. They were scandalized by her prodigality; her carriages were always drawn by eight horses; and it may truly be said that she hastened to accomplish her short destiny.

Madame de Montespan, who was furious at the result of her own imprudence in introducing her to the king, abandoned herself to the most violent transports of jealousy. But she had an enemy far more formidable in the person of Madame Scarron, to whom the king had given the name and lands of Maintenon, and who was secretly and incessantly working upon his mind by her superstitious insinuations; so that her apparent wisdom made a greater impression upon him than the brilliant wit of Madame de Montespan, who sought a retreat to be freed from domestic quarrels.

She repaired to the duchess de la Vallière at the convent of the Carmelites, and through her example subjected herself to various austerities. "Is it true," she one day inquired of the duchess, "that you are as happy as you appear to be?" "I am not happy," replied the pious Carmelite; "but I am quite contented:" a reply which marked the calm of a good conscience, even under the weight of affliction. In this retreat she one day saw the queen, who was in the habit of visiting the duchess, upon which she threw herself at her feet and

entreated her pardon. The kind and indulgent sovereign generously accorded it, but she had also the weakness to invite her to return to court, and reinstated her in her function of superintendent of her household. Madame de Montespan accepted the offer, doubtless with the firm resolution of living in an exemplary manner. Accordingly she reappeared at court, and for a short time maintained her resolution.

In the mean time the duchess of Fontanges triumphed ; she was the superb amazon of the chase, the fairy of the gardens of Versailles, and the brilliant sultana at court : but her triumph was short. Madame de Maintenon, who by her studied appearance had obtained some influence at court, endeavoured to convert her as well as Louis, but her power of persuasion failed, for the young favourite, who was wearied with so much useless eloquence, did not deign to reply to her aged counsellor, but turned her back and commenced singing. More serious warnings were, however, reserved for her, for in 1680 she gave birth to a son, who died on coming into the world, and the effects of her accouchement, which had been most dangerous, robbed her of the rare beauty she so dearly prized.

The duchess of Fontanges felt that in losing her personal attractions she had lost all, and Louis XIV. did not fail to make her conscious of this sad truth. She

accordingly asked and obtained permission to retire to the convent of Port Royal, where the king ordered the duke de Feuillade to visit her frequently. From the time of the birth of her child she gradually declined ; her last moments were spent in tears of remorse for the past, and when about to die she sent to entreat the king to come and bid her a last adieu. He at first refused, dreading the commiseration it would cause him ; but, fearing to wound her, at length yielded to her request.

On seeing her, Louis could not restrain his tears ; he found the woman who was lately so lovely and seducing, a pale skeleton, with sunken eyes, and a countenance scarcely recognisable ; she gazed on him with a species of avidity, tenderly bade him farewell, and begged of him to marry her sister, that she might avoid meeting with a similar fate to her own. The king promised to grant her request, at which the dying girl's countenance coloured with the last rays of joy. She warmly thanked him for visiting her, and said that such a mark of tenderness had softened her last moments ; then pressing his hand, she expired at the age of twenty, in the year 1681. It has been said that before her death she declared that she had been poisoned by Madame de Montespan, but there is no foundation for the assertion. She was buried at Port Royal, and her heart was deposited in the abbey of Chelles.

Madame de Montespan, who reappeared at court still beautiful and weak, was induced by Louis, who became once more enamoured of her, to resume her former mode of life, and forget her wise resolutions. But new quarrels, caused by Madame de Maintenon, who secretly triumphed, again divided the lovers, and after the death of the duchess de Fontanges, Madame de Montespan openly exhibited such indecent joy, that the king expressed his discontent at her insensibility. Madame de Maintenon's reserved manners appeared to him more estimable than her impetuosity, and the beautiful, the ironical, the intellectual, and superb marchioness de Montespan felt too late that she must quit the Tuileries, Versailles, Marley, and the brilliant fêtes and carousals; she must bid adieu to grandeur and power in all its forms, and experience all that was terrible in the triumph of her enemies, all that was bitter in the indifference of her friends.

In 1682 her son the duke of Maine was employed to convey her the order for her dismissal from court, a circumstance which does not display much delicacy on the part of Louis XIV., and which Madame de Montespan felt keenly. Driven from the court, from the king's heart, and perhaps from his memory, Madame de Montespan went where all the disgraced and faded mistresses went, to a convent, which she had built, and where she

retired with a withering sorrow at her heart. For many years she vainly invoked the balm of religion, but disappointment rankled in her mind; she could not forget or endure to forego her late brilliant position.

She visited several monasteries in France, but, not being enabled to accustom herself to a conventual life, resided for some time at her château of Petit-Bourg, where she wandered like a desolate shadow beneath the venerable trees in her park, or on the banks of the Seine, murmuring her regrets at the infidelity of her royal lover.

Generous in the midst of her misery, she at length sought diversion in acts of charity; for, although in the year 1676 the marquis de Montespan had procured a divorce, she had a large fortune of her own, independently of which the king gave her an annual pension of eight thousand louis, and in 1700 presented her with one hundred thousand francs to purchase the domains of Oiron for her legitimate son the duke d'Antin; so that she had ample means of satisfying her benevolent inclinations. But, weary and restless, she determined on settling permanently, and accordingly retired to the convent of Saint Joseph, where the excellent and pious La Tour became the director of her conscience.

The king obtained her promise never to return to court, or to seek to revenge herself upon the woman who

had made her descend from the throne; he made her write to her husband, to ask his forgiveness and permission to return to him, entreating him with the greatest humility and contrition to receive her; but Monsieur de Montespan desired her never more to address him, and would never hear her name mentioned. She employed all she possessed in solacing and relieving the poor, for whom she made clothes of coarse materials, and was constantly engaged in some employment of a charitable nature, leaving it only to attend her devotions, or to sustain herself with an austere frugal meal. She changed her costly robes for those of the coarsest stuff, and subjected herself to severe privations, always wearing a ceinture lined with iron points which pierced her at each movement. She even subdued her tongue, or rather her spirit, that flexible, vivacious, and ironical dart, which she had launched against so many reputations at court, killing many and wounding more; so that the sarcastic, scornful empress became the simple and indulgent woman, void of either wit or malice.

One species of pride, however, she never relinquished, notwithstanding her austerities; she would not renounce the ceremonies in practice at court. There was but one fauteuil in her room, and that she occupied; when the princes her sons, her daughter the duchess of Orleans, or any of the blood royal visited her, she received them

without rising, and they were seated on chairs. Many of the court visited her, but she never returned any visits.

Notwithstanding her mortifications and change of life and habits, Madame de Montespan remained beautiful until her last hour, but her health gradually declined. Two months of each year she spent at Bourbon-Archambault for the benefit of the waters, and it was in that town that she was attacked with the malady which deprived of her existence in a few hours: her immediate death was caused by the extreme ignorance of her medical attendants, who injudiciously administered emetics to her; a remedy which was much in vogue in the seventeenth century. She availed herself of some moments of ease to make a public confession of her errors, and declare her sorrow for the bad example she had given and the scandal she had occasioned; and in this humble and repentant disposition she breathed her last, in the year 1707, at the age of sixty-six.

Her legitimate son the duke d'Antin went to Bourbon-Archambault, and, after looking coldly on her, ordered her to be embalmed; but she was left so long unburied, that the public dignitaries at length caused the body to be transported to Poitiers, and deposited in her own family vault. She left directions for her heart to be conveyed to the convent of Saint Joseph, but there was so much delay, owing to the negligence of the embalmers,

that her wishes could not be complied with. Saint Edmé asserts that the père gardien of the convent of the Capucins de Bourbon threw it away.

Louis XIV. displayed no emotion on being informed of the death of the once-adored Marchioness de Montespan. She had seven children by him : Louis-Auguste de Bourbon, duke de Maine, who was declared by his father capable of succeeding to the throne ; Cesar-Louis, count de Vixin, abbé of Saint-Denis and Saint-Germain ; Louise Françoise, Mademoiselle de Nantes, who married Louis III., duke of Bourbon, grandson of the great Condé ; Louise-Marie-Antoinette, Mademoiselle de Tours ; Françoise-Marie, Mademoiselle de Blois, who married the duke of Orleans, regent of France ; Louis-Alexandre, count of Toulouse ; and one other son, who died young : all of whom were pronounced legitimate in 1673. Madame de Montespan had one son only by her husband ; he was the duke d'Antin.

After the dismissal of Madame de Montespan, Maria Theresa was once more solaced with the affection of her husband, through the persuasions of Madame de Maintenon ; and the broken-hearted queen openly testified her satisfaction and friendship for that artful woman. Her domestic griefs had, however, made severe inroads upon her constitution ; and this model of virtue and patience expired in 1683, at the château de Chombord,

aged forty-five years. In her last moments the king approached her bed and addressed her in Spanish ; his consoling language appeared to reanimate her for a moment, and her appearance testified that she died more content.

After her death Louis XIV. declared publicly that the queen had never caused him any grief but by her death ; he sincerely lamented the virtuous wife whose premature loss he had occasioned ; and so great was his veneration for her memory, that on the anniversary of her death he never partook of any recreation, but confined himself the whole day to his apartment. Nevertheless, this monarch, who so cruelly neglected that truly royal and amiable princess, who was the ornament of her sex, reserved all his love and tenderness for an intriguing parvenue, whom he afterwards made his lawful wife.

Maria Theresa had three sons and as many daughters—the dauphin Louis, and two sons, who were successively dukes of Anjou ; her daughters all died young : the grief which destroyed her health extended its influence over the physical strength of her children, not one of whom lived to succeed his father. She was buried in the royal tomb of Saint Denis.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.

FRANCES D'AUBIGNÉ was the only daughter of Constant d'Aubigné, and Jane de Cardillac, who was descended from a noble family in Guyenne; she was born in the year 1635, in the prison of Niort, where her father, who was greatly addicted to extravagance, was detained for debt. His wife having chosen to accompany him there, her sister Madame de Vilette conveyed the newly-born infant from the prison to the château de Murcay, and had her nursed with her own daughter.

In 1639 her father was removed from Niort to the château Trompette at Bordeaux, and obtained his liberty upon condition that he would renounce the Protestant religion, which all his family professed, and embrace the Catholic faith; but to elude his promise he determined to proceed to Martinique, and embarked for that island with his wife and daughter. Their voyage was attended with accidents, for on one occasion the vessel narrowly escaped being captured by an Algerine corsair; and the little Frances was attacked with so serious an illness, that all signs of life disappeared, and preparations were made for placing her in the sepulchre which usually awaits those who die at sea, when her mother, who could not abandon hope, discovered some sign of life in the

inanimate form of her child, and by unceasing efforts she was recovered from an obstinate and profound lethargy.

Her father entered into a mercantile house, and by great exertions amassed a considerable sum of money, so that Mademoiselle d'Aubigné received in that colony a brilliant education, which was afterwards the source of all her prosperity. But fortune was as fickle in her treatment of Monsieur d'Aubigné in Martinique as she had been to him in his native land; in 1643 he sent his daughter back to France, and died in extreme indigence in 1646.

Mademoiselle d'Aubigné was warmly welcomed by her generous benefactress Madame de Vilette, with whom she might have lived happily; but by the order of the ecclesiastical court she was removed from the care of this Protestant friend, and confided to that of another relation, Madame de Neuillant, a zealous Catholic of Poitou, who employed every effort to convert her young charge. Her endeavours were, however, vain; and Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, who persisted in her religious principles, was condemned by Madame de Neuillant to overlook and assist in the lower work of the servants and to take charge of the farm-yard.

A young peasant, who, like herself, was employed to guard the sheep and cows while grazing, and who by daily meeting her had become a familiar acquaintance,

fell in love with her, and Madame de Neuillant, who discovered his inclination, immediately sent her to the convent of the Ursulines de Niort. She was, however, expelled shortly after, the nuns refusing to retain so rebellious a pupil, who endeavoured to convert the whole monastery to Protestantism, as well as the priest who was engaged to instruct her; and incessantly opposed his doctrine by arguments drawn from scriptural texts.

Madame de Neuillant therefore conducted Mademoiselle d'Aubigné to Paris in 1648, and obliged her to travel on the mule which conveyed her bedding. In Paris she was sent to an Ursuline convent, and while there she had the misfortune to lose all she held dear on earth,—her mother and her aunt. Finding herself without friends, or any support in the world, and wearied with continual solicitations, she at length abjured the religion of her fathers, and embraced the Catholic faith in the convent of the Ursulines de Paris, in the year 1649.

From that time Madame de Neuillant treated her more kindly, and introduced her to society, in which she shone by her intellectual talent; but her guardian was too avaricious to pay any attention to her personal appearance or dress, and this negligence often caused her to shed tears of mortification. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, Mademoiselle d'Aubigné was an object of

admiration to the chevalier de Meri, the marquis de Villarceaux (Ninon de l'Enclos' lover), and Paul Scarron, the wit of the day. The latter, indignant at the unjust treatment she received from Madame de Neuillant, offered to release her from her odious care, either by paying her expenses at the convent or by marrying her.

Mademoiselle d'Aubigné was then only sixteen years of age, and Scarron, so celebrated for his burlesque writings, was aged, deformed, overwhelmed with infirmities, gouty, and nailed to his elbow-chair, but always cheerful and gay, notwithstanding his sufferings. She was tired of the cloister and accepted him for her husband with gratitude, but his poverty was such that Mademoiselle de Pons lent her a dress for appearing in at the ceremony of her marriage.

Scarron occupied two small chambers in the Rue de la Tissanderie ; all the fortune he possessed consisted in the produce of his works, and an annual pension of fifteen hundred francs, in quality of a *malade de la Reine-mère*. But the poet's narrow fortune did not prevent the most clever and intellectual persons at court from frequenting his modest apartments, whither they were attracted by his sparkling wit and enlivening conversation.

In this brilliant society the young wife, who was called *la belle Indienne*, formed an acquaintance with the be-

witching Ninon de l'Enclos, who was so celebrated for her beauty, grace, wit, and elegant manners. They were in the habit of assembling to sup at Scarron's, where their evenings were divided between gay songs, bon-mots, and the charms of agreeable conversation, in which Madame Scarron possessed eloquent facility. It is said that on one occasion, when thus engaged in an interesting discourse, the servant went near her and whispered to her, "Madame, encore une histoire; le rôl manque aujourd'hui."

Madame Scarron's solicitude for her aged and infirm husband gained her as much esteem as her beauty obtained her admirers. She rarely quitted *le pauvre paralytique*, as she was in the habit of calling him. When he was ill, she was his nurse and servant; when re-established, his companion, secretary, and reader. When not engaged in receiving company, she occupied herself in the compilation of her husband's works, and studied Spanish, Italian, and Latin, all of which she was well versed in.

In the year 1660, after a union of ten years, she became a widow, and sincerely lamented her protector, who left her at the age of twenty-six in a state of extreme indigence, with nothing but the recollection of his talents and his debts, and in the possession of great beauty.

She was of middle height and an elegant figure, with clear chestnut-coloured hair and brilliant black eyes: these charms were heightened by reserved and modest manners. Such were her moral as well as personal advantages, that Queen Christina of Sweden, who disliked her own sex generally, felicitated Scarron on the possession of such a wife.

Her beauty and indigence caused her many temptations. Foquet, the superintendent of finances, sent her a superb casket containing money and very valuable jewels; but the beautiful widow indignantly repulsed the emissary and the present; the marquis de Crequi met with the same reception; and the queen-mother, appreciating her disinterestedness, restored her her late husband's pension.

She was in this position when Ninon l'Enclos offered her her house and table, but Madame Scarron afterwards proved herself ungrateful by forgetting her friendship, as she did the goodness of Louis XIV. in later years. It is said also that Madame Scarron owed a part of the means which enabled her to appear in society, and the reparation of her fortune, to the favours she accorded to the duke of Villars, and marshal Harcourt's father, who introduced her to the hôtel Richelieu, where she was received as *lady's companion*. Amongst other duties, her business was to see that the fires were reple-

nished, the dinner-tables properly arranged and served, and to order the carriages: these fastidious charges were a short time afterwards dispensed with by the introduction of bells.

She has been accused of having encouraged the attentions of Ninon's lover, the marquis of Villarceaux, notwithstanding the proofs of friendship which she obtained from her; and in one of her letters Ninon remarks, "*Leur avoir prêté sa chambre jaune.*"

For some time Madame Scarron chose a retreat in the Hospitaliers of the Place Royal, where she lived content with little; but in 1666, the death of Anne of Austria replunged her into absolute indigence, and a cotemporary author affirms that her name was inscribed on the charitable list in the parish of Saint Eustache. The marshal d'Albret then offered her his hôtel, and the widow accepted that asylum, but formed a resolution never to receive that gentleman's visits but in his wife's presence. The duke de Saint Simon asserts that Monsieur de Villarceaux, for whom she had a decided preference, maintained her for some time during her distress, and lived with her on a small estate near Paris. Her beauty and talent were the subject of so much remark that Madame de Montespan procured a new pension for Madame Scarron, whom she remembered having seen in society, and whose merit she duly appreciated. This act of kindness

enabled her to become the tenant of a convent, where she retired with a waiting-maid named Nanon Balbieu, who some time after governed France, because she governed her mistress, who governed the king. This old servant lived to see the ministers of the country bow to her antiquated caps, and received the kisses of the king's daughters upon her cheeks. Had it not been for the assistance she received from the royal bounty through Madame de Montespan's interference, Madame Scarron would have accompanied the suite of Mademoiselle de Nemours to Portugal, whither she went to be united to Alphonso VI.

On this occasion, when requesting an audience with the Marchioness de Montespan, she artfully remarked to Madame de Thianges, that before leaving the country she hoped at least to see the *wonder of all France*, which flattery was, as she wished, conveyed to her. That lady had the greater merit for the benefits and favours she procured for the widow Scarron, because when soliciting them the king always listened to her unwillingly.

"Am I continually to hear that woman spoken of?" he one day said impatiently.

"Yes, sire," replied the favourite with courage; "I will importune you until you have snatched from misery a woman whose ancestors perished in the service of your own."

Madame Scarron's fortune may be dated from the day she obtained an interview with the Marchioness de Montespan to thank her for her goodness, for from that time the favourite resolved on placing her two children under her care. Death soon robbed her of the eldest, and all Madame Scarron's care and attention were centred in the second, who was the duke du Maine. Her solicitude for her young charge necessarily procured her the friendship of his mother, who took great pleasure in the widow's society, and spent much time with her, so that Louis displayed great jealousy at this preference, and entertained so great an aversion for Madame Scarron, and what he termed her *pruderie*, that he requested the Marchioness to reply to her only by monosyllables when he was present.

The friendship which existed between the favourite and the governess did not, however, last long; they had frequent quarrels respecting the mode of education; but Madame de Montespan was so conscious of Madame Scarron's merits that she overlooked and forgave much of her imperiousness, and constantly loaded her with presents; while, on her part, the governess was, or affected to be, so devoted to the king's children, that he could not help acknowledging her value, and, in order to recompense her for her anxious solicitude for the improvement of the delicate health of the duke du

Maine, in the year 1674 made her a present of one hundred thousand francs, with which she purchased the estate of Maintenon, near Versailles, of which she was so fond, that the king called her Madame de Maintenon from that period; fourteen years after it became a marquisate.

This voluntary present on the part of Louis XIV. gave great offence to Madame de Montespan, who made some sarcastic remarks on the occasion, upon which the governess, who had acted so skilfully as to impress the king with an idea that her presence was actually necessary to the welfare of his children, alarmed the favourite by threatening to resign her charge, and artfully hinted her intention of doing so to Louis XIV., who entreated her to remain with them, which she consented to do upon condition that henceforward she should render an account of their health and progress to himself only.

This was the first affront offered to Madame de Montespan. She was the mother of seven children by Louis XIV., and each year added to the cares and anxieties of their governess, who devoted herself entirely to their education, living in great retirement in the Rue Vaugirard in Paris, until the king caused them to be pronounced legitimate, and called her to court. A short time before her appearance there, having judged that a journey to some watering-place would be of service

to the health of her eldest pupil, the duke du Maine, who was exceedingly weak and delicate, Madame de Maintenon conducted the children to Barrages. The change proved of very great benefit to her young charge, and on returning from her visit to that place she one day agreeably surprised the king by entering his cabinet with the young duke, whom she presented to him restored to health and no longer lame.

The monarch was both astonished and delighted at his son's restoration, and from that time his aversion for Madame de Maintenon changed into contrary sentiments. Her office as governess insensibly led her frequently to his cabinet, and drew on long conversations; politically skilful, she discovered that Louis XIV. was inclined towards a superstitious devotion, and artfully made use of her discovery as a means by which she could walk on securely towards the realization of her ambitious dreams.

The king frequently met her in the apartment of Madame de Montespan, and could not fail to notice the altercations which occurred between his favourite and the governess, who on one occasion requested his permission to leave the court, being, as she said, profoundly afflicted and seriously uneasy, from religious scruples, that his majesty had forgotten the promise he had given the Abbé Bossuet to renounce Madame de Montespan. This hypocritical and ungrateful request was not made

until Madame de Maintenon had worked upon the king's mind in such a manner as to feel sure that he would not suffer her to leave the court. She became not only an object of raillery to most of the courtiers, but also of just resentment to the still powerful marchioness; nevertheless she sacrificed her repose to her ambition; yet, when almost seated on the throne, she remarked in a letter to a friend, Ninon de l'Enclos, that she envied her peaceable independence.

In 1679 the king gave her apartments in the palace, in order that he might enjoy the charms of her conversation without constraint. Although no longer young, she was still beautiful, her eyes were brilliant and expressive, and her figure and manners elegant. From the time she became a resident at court, she ceased visiting Madame de Montespan, and actively commenced undermining her in the favour of the king, until the marchioness perceived too late that she had introduced to her royal lover the woman who would supplant her.

Madame de Maintenon first made use of her influence towards raising her own family. Her brother, Charles d'Aubigné, an undeserving and worthless spendthrift, was loaded with wealth; his sister sold places and favours to satisfy the prodigalities of this parvenue. All France murmured, and Louvois himself complained to Louis of such abuses; but the blinded king defended the actions

of his new favourite, who triumphed over her enemies, France itself, and even justice and reason.

Shortly after her installation at the palace, she persuaded the king to dismiss Madame de Montespan, and even caused her dismissal to be conveyed to her by her son the duke du Maine. By this means she insensibly drew him closer to herself, using the two powerful arguments of religion and his duty to the unhappy and declining queen, who was the victim and witness of so many acts of weakness. Maria Theresa herself, who had been so often deceived by appearances and insulted by her rivals, perceived in Madame de Maintenon nothing more than a sincere friend who was desirous of strengthening the conjugal bond; and, grateful to her for having always respected and treated her as a wife and queen, is said when dying to have placed her royal ring upon the favourite's finger

The duchess de Fontanges had, according to Malherbe's expression, lived but a morning; Madame de Montespan was exiled and forgotten, and the queen had descended into the tomb, so that Madame de Maintenon's path was now uninterrupted. To so high a degree of favour was she elevated, and such was her pride and ambition, that in 1684 she refused to accept the situation of *dame d'honneur* to the dauphine. There was but one place at which she aimed, or which she considered worthy of

her acceptance—that of the deceased queen! Louis XIV., having no longer a wife, redoubled his attentions to his friend; he even assisted her at table, spent several days with her in retirement at Maintenon, and was in the habit of walking beside her sedan-chair with his head uncovered. The court railed and the public libelled them in vain; the king's Jesuit confessor, La Chaise, and Madame de Maintenon, overruled all obstacles, and the intriguers obtained the fruits of their audacity and perseverance.

The eighteenth century offers two examples of women who experienced prodigious elevations: Louis XIV. renounced his pride of rank and aristocratic privileges in favour of Madame de Maintenon; and Peter the Great, with noble determination, recompensed the admirable courage of Catherine, by sharing with her the imperial throne. But Madame de Maintenon obtained her elevation from a promise of marriage, extorted by degrees, and through bad counsels, from an enfeebled monarch; while Catherine, a poor but heroic girl, won her crown on the banks of the Pruth. Her marriage was no innovation of the customs in Russia, because it was usual for the nobles to choose their wives from among the most beautiful women in the empire, without regard to birth; whereas, since the second race of kings in France, the political interest of the nation has been always consulted

in the alliance of the sovereigns, who are expected to sacrifice their affections for the honour of governing their country.

Madame de Maintenon's marriage was an obscure act : the ceremony was performed in secret ; and Louis XIV. dared not avow or proclaim it ; whereas it was on the day which was appointed for solemnly recompensing the brave who had assisted in obtaining the victory that Peter the Great presented his wife to the nation, proudly declaring, " Catherine Alexiewna has saved the country ; I, Czar of Moscow, make her Empress of Russia !" Such was never Madame de Maintenon's political position in France ; on the contrary, to her interference in state matters have been attributed the misfortunes which clouded the latter days of Louis XIV.'s reign.

The day on which the marriage of the king and Madame de Maintenon took place is uncertain, but it was in the year 1684. The nuptial benediction was pronounced at night, in a cabinet at Versailles, by Monsieur Harly, archbishop of Paris, in the presence of the Abbé Gabelin, the Père La Chaise, the Chevalier Forbin and the Marquises Montchevreuil and Bontems, who was the king's first valet de chambre, and served the mass on the occasion.

Although this union was not made public, it caused Madame de Maintenon to be surrounded with the homage

of the court and foreign ambassadors ; and if she was prohibited from assuming the title, she did not fail to affect the prerogatives, of a queen. Accordingly, when she went to visit the monastery of the Carmelites at Paris, the abbess respectfully observed that, according to the privileges of the establishment, the gates could be opened to the queen only. “Ouvrez toujours, ma mère,” she replied. On another occasion, the duchess of Burgundy having been suddenly indisposed when visiting her, she would not suffer that princess to be placed on her bed, but hastily arranged some pillows on the sofa for her ; as, by the etiquette of the court, all but the king are rigorously prohibited from reposing on the queen’s bed.

With the exception of the amiable and lively duchess of Burgundy, who always called Madame de Maintenon *ma tante*, the royal family entertained great dislike for their new relative, and could with difficulty support the idea of her marriage, while the nation considered it both ridiculous and burdensome.

During the manœuvres of the camp at Compiègne in 1696, the army beheld the children and grandchildren of France obliged to stand in the presence of this parvenue, or to sit on the poles of her sedan-chair, the glasses of which she always kept closed, to preserve her complexion from any injury which it might sustain from contact with the air. Several of the royal princes were so

much mortified that they suffered expressions of discontent to escape them, for which they incurred the king's displeasure, and consequently were disgraced. Louis's sister-in-law, Henrietta of England, remarks in her Memoirs, "*qu'elle consolait toujours la dauphine, quand cette vieille la mettait au désespoir ;*" and upon some slight breach of respect on the part of the princess de Conti, the king launched so angry a look at her, that she fainted away, and was dangerously ill afterwards.

Madame de Maintenon never visited the king's daughters, but sometimes sent for them, "*pour leur laver la tête comme une bonne marâtre, et elles en sortaient toutes en pleurs.*" All trembled before her power. In 1669, Racine the tragedian, having without thought spoken of the benefactor and husband of her early days, Scarron, in her presence, became suddenly aware of his imprudence, and was so confused and agitated on the occasion, that he died from the consequences of his emotion. Although her marriage was strictly secret, she was nevertheless careful to make even the peasantry acquainted with it, and had the gratification of being called *your Majesty* by that class of people at Versailles and Maintenon. Madame d'Houdicourt, in speaking to her of the royal hunt one day, said, "*Nos maris reviendront tard.*"

Louis XIV. solemnly promised his minister Louvois

that he would never declare his marriage with Madame de Maintenon ; nevertheless, in 1685, yielding to his wife's ambitious entreaties, he was about to proclaim her queen, when Louvois threw himself at the monarch's feet in presence of several noblemen of the court, and, presenting him his sword, entreated him to kill him, if he intended violating his oath. The king hesitated, but Louvois embraced his knees, and refused to rise until he declared that he would keep his promise. The archbishop of Paris also reminded him of his oath, which the king renewed to him also. It was not however, long before these two men, who had the courage to perform their duty to their sovereign and country, were disgraced ; Madame de Maintenon was disappointed, but she was also revenged.

The king always received the ministers for the discussion of state affairs, in which she participated, in her apartments ; on some occasions her advice was good, but on most it was interested ; and several important appointments were bestowed on her creatures or friends, whether they were capable of undertaking them or otherwise. She nominated her favourite Chamillart minister of the army and navy, and disgraced Catinat to make room for Villeroy.

In 1700 she biassed the council, and by her influence caused them to determine on accepting the will of the king of Spain, which conferred the crown on the duke

of Anjou. She also formed an intimacy with the princess des Ursins, who was all-powerful in the reign of Philip V., in order to obtain some influence in the administration of Spain.

The establishment of Saint Cyr is the only sumptuous work which she effected. It is said, that, despairing of gaining the king's attachment, and fearing that he would never conceive a serious passion for her, she was desirous of multiplying the objects of her affection, and consequently established and educated two hundred and fifty young girls of good family, but without beauty or fortune, and on their leaving Saint Cyr the king gave them a dower.

But this act of selfish benevolence does not compensate for the evil she did by counselling the king to revoke the edict of Nantes. Though Louis XIV. had much grandeur of soul, he possessed also a fanatical and devotional superstition, which he imbibed from Anne of Austria. Instead of exercising her influence towards modifying his religious sentiments, Madame de Maintenon was always fearful of appearing attached to her former faith, and considered it wiser to flatter the sovereign upon whose will the publication of her marriage depended.

Louvois cruelly executed the barbarous decree which was the result of her pernicious advice, and which

deprived France of three millions of useful and peaceful citizens. Soldiers were sent into all the Protestant towns and villages, with permission to use every means, with impunity, for the propagation of the Catholic faith. Gentlemen were mutilated, and their houses, lands, and tenantry destroyed by fire and sword; babes were torn from the maternal breast; mothers and wives had their heads shaved, and were thrown into the cells of convents; pastors expired on the wheel; and citizens were burned in their houses. Such were the consequences of Madame de Maintenon's fatal influence over Louis XIV.

France was horrified at the consequences of their union, and the virtuous Fenelon opposed its proclamation with courageous resistance, for which he paid the price of exile in 1692. Madame de Maintenon, who knew how to awaken Louis XIV.'s superstitious terrors, even caused a blacksmith to come from the little town of Salon, in Provence, and to assure the king that he had seen the phantom of Maria Theresa in the forest three several times, and that the phantom had strictly and solemnly charged him to tell the king to acknowledge Madame de Maintenon as queen. Louis admitted this impostor, and conversed with him in private; he appeared much struck at what he communicated, spoke of it with credulity, and, but for the strenuous zeal of Bossuet and Fenelon, her ambitious dreams of elevation would have been realized.

To please the king she undertook the conversion of all her own relatives. In speaking of one of her rebellious little cousins, she said, “Je la convertirai, aussi; il n’y a d’autres moyens que la violence.” The king’s doubts respecting the sincerity of her religious faith vanished before such demonstrations of zeal; her power became daily more absolute, and she profited by it to load all her family with riches. In 1698 she married her niece Mademoiselle d’Aubigné to the count d’Ayen, afterwards duke of Noailles, gave her from her own private purse six hundred thousand francs towards her dower, and induced the king to give her eight hundred thousand, and jewels to the amount of four thousand louis, as well as the situation of *dame du palais*. She also gave her husband the appointment of governor of Rousillon and Berri. Madame de Maintenon was, however, less interested for herself, having refused any gifts from the king beyond that of the domain of Maintenon.

The enfeebled monarch was never content but in her society; he neither conversed, played, nor partook of his repasts without her, and frequently retired with her to Marley or Fontainebleau for several successive days. Thus she robbed France of his paternal solicitude, to engage him in frivolous superstitions and theological contentions, or private and insignificant details, which were quite unworthy the attention of the ruler of a great

empire. She even infected him with her affection for Saint Cyr, for he interested himself in that establishment as if it were of the highest importance, while France was placed upon the edge of a precipice by the inexperience of her creature, Chamillart.

His court, once so brilliant, became cold and rigid, and the king's society was composed of his wife, his confessor La Chaise, the priest Letellier, and some other fanatics who had advised him to revoke the edict of Nantes, by which his grandfather, Henry the Great, had insured peace and security to the Protestants.

In the midst of her grandeur, Madame de Maintenon was not happy: "Quelle corvée," she one day said to her brother, "d'avoir à amuser un homme qui n'est plus *amusable*!" The expression may have been true, but it was equally ungrateful. Her brother, who was much more worldly, but also more sensible of gratitude, replied: "Avez-vous donc promis d'épouser Dieu le Père?"

As soon as she was convinced that her marriage would never be proclaimed, Madame de Maintenon no longer dissembled the ennui she felt in the king's society, and spent much of her time at Saint Cyr, with the young people over whom she reigned. *There* she found some diversion to the weariness she confessed she experienced at court, for she wrote thus to one of her friends: "Que

ne puis-je vous donner toute mon expérience ? que ne puis-je vous faire voir l'ennui qui dévore les grands, et la peine qu'ils ont à remplir leur journée ? . . . Ne voyez-vous pas que je meurs de tristesse dans une fortune qu'on aurait peine à imaginer ? . . . Le roi ne sort pas de ma chambre. . . . Je ne le sens que trop ; il n'est pas de dédommagement pour la perte de la liberté."

While Madame de Maintenon bestowed all her affections on Saint Cyr, Louis XIV. sometimes relieved the monotony of his existence by visiting Mademoiselle de la Chausseraye, who was the daughter of a gentleman named Lepelet de Verno, of Poitou, and became an indigent orphan at a very early age, but was adopted by her brother, who had her educated and conducted her to court. Through the interests of her maternal relatives, Biron, Villeroi, and Brissac, she was nominated maid of honour to the duchess of Orleans, and by her elegant manners and agreeable conversation attracted the notice of the king, who, often wearied with the rigid etiquette of his wife's stern court, was gratified to meet with a frank and simple-hearted woman.

Louis's attachment for Mademoiselle de la Chausseraye is little known ; he first saw her in 1710, and is said to have entertained no other sentiment for her but that of friendship ; nevertheless her influence was very great. He often corresponded with and visited her at her little

château de Madrid, near the Bois de Boulogne, where his liberalities enabled her to form a collection of curiosities which greatly amused the monarch. He also frequently sent for her to Versailles, where she went under pretext of visiting her intimate friend, the duchess of Ventadour; and Madame Bloin, who usually conveyed the king's letters and messages to Mademoiselle de la Chausseraye, was in the habit of conducting her by a secret staircase to Louis's private apartments, where, free from the etiquette of his melancholy court, he took great pleasure in her cheerful and agreeable conversation.

Mademoiselle de la Chausseraye had friends amongst all classes of society, and, though not intimate with Madame de Maintenon, was on friendly terms with her. She performed many gratuitous acts of kindness, often suffering the parties she had assisted to remain ignorant of their benefactress. During the regency of the duke of Orleans, she preserved her friends at court, as well as her influence, which was never exercised but in a good cause; thus by her presence of mind she saved the cardinal of Noailles, who was an object of persecution to the Jesuits, at the period when France was involved in religious quarrels. This prelate was much beloved by the Parisians, and the king gave his consent to his being seized, on going out of the capital, and conveyed to Rome to be deprived of his dignities. Mademoiselle

de la Chausseraye, having discovered this conspiracy against the archbishop of Paris, immediately sought him, and persuaded him not to leave the town, by which means she saved the good prelate severe humiliations and misfortunes.

Until his death Louis XIV. invariably honoured Mademoiselle de la Chausseraye with his friendship and confidence. She spent all her life in works of charity and devotion, and died in retirement at an advanced age in her château de Madrid.

Madame de Maintenon's influence never ceased, notwithstanding she devoted so much of her time and affection on Saint Cyr. *There* she received the homage of the young people whose fortunes she made. She could endure no rival, and consequently dismissed the original foundress of the establishment, the amiable and exemplary Madame de Brinon, who was reduced to indigence by the change, and nominated one of the pupils in her place, by which arrangement she became sole directress. She corresponded with the superiors of all the religious communities in France, of both sexes, giving them rules for their conduct, "et se croyait ainsi la mère de l'église et l'abbesse universelle." She frequently conducted her royal husband to Saint Cyr, where she made her pupils perform Racine's sacred tragedies in his presence. She even desired that the nuns should have

their dresses made according to the prevailing fashion, and also that they should discard the wimple, which covers the neck and throat ; and the pope, Innocent XI. (Odescalchi), who was in all other respects much gratified with the efforts Madame de Maintenon had made in favour of the Catholic religion, sanctioned this singular decree, saying that he could refuse nothing to *la dame du roi*.

She was, however, detested by the people, not only on account of her participation in the king's acts of violence against the Protestants, but also for her choice of ministers, and her influence and interference in political affairs. At court she had very few friends. The duchess of Burgundy, whom she used to call her *mignonne*, died young ; and Madame de Glapion, whom she had appointed as superior at Saint Cyr, was more her servant and confidante than her friend. The duke of Maine was the only being who was attached to her in her old age, and she made such unceasing endeavours to induce Louis XIV. to confer the regency on him by will, that the king, displeased at her importunity, threatened to exclude her own name from that document.

Madame de Maintenon retired to Saint Cyr a few days previous to Louis XIV.'s death, which occurred in 1715. Some authors say, in excuse for this act of ingratitude, that she was urged by Villeroi to do so, but

her duty should have overruled all other persuasions. This once great monarch, when languishing through his last feeble hours, found his palace almost deserted, and his unworthy wife absent from his death-bed, beside which his faithful and devoted surgeon, Maréchal, remained almost alone. When Madame de Maintenon was about to quit him, he feelingly and affectionately said to her, “*Je ne regrette que vous. Adieu : nous nous reverrons dans un monde meilleur.*”

Marshal Villeroi ordered a considerable body of guards to escort her to Saint Cyr, fearing that she might receive some injury from the justly irritated people, for she had been repeatedly hailed by furious clamours in the streets of Paris, and when the king was about to die there was no longer any security for her. On entering her favourite asylum she exclaimed, “*Je ne veux que Dieu et mes enfans.*” The duke of Orleans, whom she would have despoiled of the regency if she could have prevailed on Louis XIV. to nominate the duke of Maine, generously forgot the injury she would have done him, and went to visit and console her at Saint Cyr : he also insisted on continuing her pension of forty-eight thousand francs, honourably declaring that Madame de Maintenon’s disinterested conduct in regard of herself rendered it necessary.

In Saint Cyr she lived tranquilly and inexpensively,

and devoted herself to the government of the community and to religious practices. She was sometimes visited by Madame Caylus, the duke of Noailles, Cardinal Rohan, and Marshal Villeroi; but her greatest pleasure was to receive her old pupil, the duke of Maine. The dethroned queen of England was frequently a guest at the table of Madame de Maintenon, who was served by eight or nine young ladies of noble birth, whose duty it was also to read to her, and attend to all her personal concerns. After the repast, followed some hours of conversation, when the queen and Madame de Maintenon embraced each other, and the *maids of honour* accompanied the wife of James II. to her carriage. When Peter the Great visited France in 1717, he expressed a wish to see Louis XIV.'s widow, but was far from manifesting the same enthusiasm for her as Christina of Sweden displayed for Ninon de l'Enclos in her old age. Madame de Maintenon was confined to her bed when she received the czar, who entered her apartment, drew aside the curtains, stared at her for a few minutes, and retired without speaking a word.

Instead of being amiable and indulgent in her old age, she was stern and melancholy, and until her last moments appeared tormented with the remembrance of honours which were no longer rendered to her. Her last affections were centred in the duke of Maine, whose exile for

conspiracy against the regent, hastened her death. On being informed of his arrest, she prostrated herself at the foot of the altar, where her extreme agitation brought on a fever.

When she beheld her end approaching, she made liberal presents to all the poor in the neighbourhood, daily received the sacrament, and calmly declared to her relatives, Madame Caylus and the duke of Noailles, that she left without regret a world in which she had experienced nothing but weariness. She expired in 1719, at the age of eighty-four, infirm in body, but sound in mind. Her remains were accompanied by all the young ladies of Saint Cyr to the church of that convent, and buried in the choir, with great solemnity, in presence of several bishops. Her tomb, which was destroyed during the revolution, was re-established in 1802 by the heads of the college of Saint Cyr. The only remarkable clause which her will contained is the following: “Je donne à Monsieur l’Archévêque de Rouen (d’Aubigné) le crucifix en velours noir qui est au chevet de mon lit, avec le petit portrait du roi qui est au-dessus, désirant qu’il soit gardé à jamais par ceux de mon nom qui le regarderont avec la vénération et la reconnaissance qu’ils lui doivent.”

It is a singular fact that, while Madame de Maintenon governed France, the duchess of Marlborough ruled in England, and the Princess des Ursins in Spain, so that

a great part of Europe was under the dominion of women.

Madame de Maintenon's favourite maxim was "Rien n'est plus adroit qu'une conduite irréprochable ;" nevertheless she failed to practise it, for, though she possessed rare talents and some good qualities, she exercised her influence to the injury of the people and the national interest; and sacrificed the Protestants, and the religion of her birth, in order to obtain the sole wishes of her heart—her fatal marriage and the proclamation of it.

QUEEN MARIE LECKZINSKY.

(Reign of Louis XV.)

ALL Louis XIV.'s children and grandchildren descended to the tomb prematurely, and, of all that brilliant and numerous dynasty, one tender and feeble plant only survived him. He appointed his nephew, the duke of Orleans, to be regent during the minority of the young king, Louis XV., although Madame de Maintenon, in order to induce him to bestow it on her protégé, the duke of Maine, insinuated to the king that the duke of Orleans himself had spread the mourning veil over the royal house of Bourbon. But these odious suspicions were discarded

when it was found that the regent surrounded the young king with every possible care, and felt the most lively solicitude for his delicate health, so that he surmounted all dangers, and lived to a good old age. The duke of Orleans was a man of licentious habits, but he was not criminal; and, after the example already offered of the manner in which he performed his duty to Louis XV., it is unnecessary to deny another calumny with which he was insulted, namely, that he wished to have imprisoned the young king in the Bastille. The manner in which he acquitted himself of his duties to the state reflects honour upon his memory, but his irregularities cannot be excused; and though the brilliant conqueror of Steinkerque and Nerwinde frankly avowed his disorderly habits when reproached for them, the accusation of murder always roused his just indignation.

In 1692 he married Mary Frances de Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Blois, the *legitimated* daughter of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan. The duke's mother opposed the union for some time, being astonished, as also were the courtiers, that the king should marry his nephew to one of his natural daughters; but they were so numerous that he could not find suitable establishments for all, and, having already placed some of them in the royal houses of Condé and Conti, he observed to the duke of Orleans that, as the war rendered his union with a foreign

princess impossible, he had selected one of his own daughters for him. In vain Madame the duchess of Orleans wept, reproached her son, and it is said even struck him ; in vain she assured Mademoiselle de Blois that her future husband loved another princess ; she replied, “ Je ne me soucie pas qu’il m’aime, mais qu’il m’épouse ;” and the marriage took place.

The young duchess possessed few personal attractions. She was tall, but not so much distinguished for grace as her mother ; for she walked badly ; her complexion, eyes, and arms were very beautiful, but her eyebrows were red, although her hair was auburn, and her cheeks large and pendent. She conversed with fluency, and inherited Madame de Montespan’s graceful language and facility of elocution. She also maintained great dignity and reserve in the duke’s scandalous court after he became regent, and was much admired for the respectability of her retinue, her virtuous conduct, the care she bestowed on the education of her children, her sincere piety, and her patience under her husband’s numerous infidelities. Amongst his many favourites were the marchioness de Parabène, the countess de Sabran, and the duchess de Falarì ; he did not, however, suffer either of them to participate in the affairs of state. One day Madame de Sabran having attempted to speak to him respecting some political affairs and promotions,

the prince conducted her to a mirror, and asked her if it was possible for a man to converse on business with so beautiful a face before him.

The duchess of Orleans had much chagrin, not only on account of her husband's irregularities, but also her daughters' depravities, especially that of the eldest. The court, which had been restrained in its frivolous tastes and habits by the severity of Madame de Maintenon, threw aside the mask on the death of Louis XIV., and its liberty degenerated into immoderate licentiousness, which the regent encouraged by his example.

This prince, who was endowed with great valour and a penetrating mind, zealously attended to the affairs of state during the day, but each night was devoted to revelling with the roués and ladies of the court, when all communication of any kind was interdicted, and the orgies known under the name of the *soupers du régent* continued until morning. At this epoch depravity so entirely invaded the manners of the highest class of society, that the duchess of Longueville declared she did not like *innocent pleasures*; and the regent's mother, Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, thus expresses herself: "Madame la duchesse de Bourbon peut beaucoup boire sans perdre la tête; ses filles veulent l'imiter, mais elles n'ont pas la tête assez forte." With such examples the corruption was general; and under that influence, and

in that atmosphere, the regent's daughters grew up, it being impossible for their mother to preclude their living in their father's court.

The eldest, who was married to Louis XIV.'s grandson, the duke of Berri, was a catalogue of all the vices, avarice excepted. She publicly treated her mother with the utmost disdain, because she was the natural daughter of Louis XIV.; assumed the prerogative of a queen; had a throne erected for herself in the theatre; received the ambassadors in her apartments seated on an estrade beneath a canopy; always drove about Paris accompanied by a military band, which preceded her carriage; and persuaded her father, who idolized her, to give her a body-guard composed of fifty gentlemen. This princess is suspected of having poisoned her husband, who was very amiable, and who, according to Saint Simon, endeavoured for a length of time to induce her to give up her dissolute mode of life, but, finding his efforts useless, plainly declared to her that, if she did not attend to his counsels and put a term to her disorderly conduct, he would place her in a convent. Shortly after this menace, the duke of Berri, when dining with his wife at Versailles, was suddenly seized with convulsions, of which he died, after drinking some mulled wine which the duchess herself had prepared for him; it was, however, generally reported that the prince while hunting had

met with an injury which brought on a vomiting of blood that caused his death.

The duchess of Orleans was not more fortunate in her other daughters, and, wishing the second, Mademoiselle de Chartres, to avoid the evil example of her elder sister, resolved that she should enter the cloister. In 1719 she was named abbess of the Benedictines of Chelles, in place of Madame Villars; but the veil did not preserve Mademoiselle de Chartres from engaging in worldly amusements and vices; she frequently followed the chase, and spent whole days in making fireworks and in pistol-shooting. Having grown weary of her abbey at Chelles, in 1734 she repaired to the priory of the Benedictines of the Madeleine du Traisnel at Paris, where she studied theology, embraced Jansenism, and, while her fanaticism lasted, signed her letters "*l'épouse de Jésus Christ.*"

The younger sister, Mademoiselle de Valois, imitated the duchess of Berri in her dissolute mode of life, and, like her, found little pleasure in the society of the duchess of Orleans and her small circle of exemplary friends.

The regent had great esteem for his wife, who lived in a retired manner, and spent a great portion of her time with Madame Sforce, daughter of Madame de Thianges, relieving her voluntary solitude by the charms

of literature, which she encouraged. Nevertheless, she frequently expressed herself impatient for the approach of death, declaring herself weary of her existence,—one of the many proofs that happiness does not always dwell with elevated rank or wealth; for her husband skilfully governed one of the largest empires in the world, and she was the possessor of three millions of francs (a considerable sum in those days), and jewels to the amount of two hundred thousand crowns.

The duchess of Orleans died in 1749, leaving one son, Louis Philip duke of Orleans, and seven daughters.

After the death of the regent, who had negotiated a marriage for Louis XV. with the Infanta of Spain, the duke of Bourbon became prime minister, and, perceiving that his young master, who was then sixteen years of age, had no great affection for his future wife, who was only six, proposed that he should espouse a princess that was older, and a council was held upon the subject. Accordingly the Infanta was sent back to Spain under the pretext that it was necessary to provide France with a queen immediately, and that the extreme youth of Maria Theresa would prevent her marriage from taking place for some years. A large escort and brilliant honours attended the young princess on her return to Spain; nevertheless Philip V. keenly felt the affront which had been offered to his daughter, and manifested

his resentment by sending his eldest son's widow back to France, as also Mademoiselle de Beaujolais, who was affianced to the Infanta Don Carlos, both of whom were daughters of the regent; no doubt his mortification was increased in consequence of the sovereign pontiff Clement XI.'s (Albani) having approved of the measure.

The Czarina Catherine I. offered to bestow her daughter Elizabeth on Louis XV., but the duke of Bourbon, who was entirely governed by his favourite the marchioness de Prie, a very talented but dissolute woman, refused this eligible alliance, as the marchioness feared her authority would be restrained by an energetic queen. Through Madame de Prie's influence also, the minister sacrificed the best interests of his own family, having refused the crown for his sister, Mademoiselle de Vermandois, who possessed strictly virtuous morals: this princess frankly expressed her disapproval and contempt of her brother's mistress and her immoral conduct, and was therefore rejected by the weak-minded duke of Bourbon.

The marchioness de Prie, wishing to preserve the direction of affairs, fixed her choice on a princess whose well known timidity and reserve were the consequence of a long series of misfortunes, and Marie Leckzinsky gratefully closed her eyes upon the vices of the woman through whose influence she ascended the throne; and

after the duke of Bourbon's banishment, sincerely pitied the fate of the beautiful and ambitious marchioness, who, unable to support her grief at her own and the duke's disgrace, poisoned herself at Courbépine, to which place she was exiled.

Marie Charlotte Sophie Félicité Leckzinsky was the daughter of Stanislaus I., king of Poland and duke of Lorraine and Bar, and of Catherine Opalinska, a descendant of one of the most ancient chiefs of Lithuania: she was born at Posen in 1703. From her cradle Marie Leckzinsky was besieged by misfortunes. Her father, the faithful ally of Charles XII., king of Sweden, by whose aid he ascended the throne of Poland, shared the reverses which befell the Swedish monarch. After the defeat at Pultawa in 1709, Stanislaus and his family were obliged to quit Warsaw, which he could not defend, and in their precipitate retreat his daughter was abandoned by her governess, who, in order to accelerate her own flight, left the princess with the baggage in a small public-house, where she was found in the loft of the stable.

Stanislaus, for whose head a price was offered by the diet, and also by his competitor Augustus, resided with his daughter for some time on the confines of the Baltic Sea, and afterwards in Pomerania; and, while Charles XII. was at Bender, took up his abode at Deux Ponts.

At length, to insure repose, he requested an asylum in France, where he and his daughter were received by the duke of Orleans, in 1720, with the greatest kindness and respect. The regent having offered him his choice of a residence, Stanislaus fixed on Weissemburg.

At this period the princess of Poland was seventeen years of age, and, notwithstanding her father's reverses, had received a careful education, he having cultivated her mind during their retirement: amongst other acquirements, she was an excellent linguist, speaking six different languages with fluency.

At an epoch of almost unparalleled depravity, in which women virtuously educated like Marie Leckzinsky were few, her strict morality and honourable misfortunes induced several sensible men, who appreciated her merit, to seek her hand; amongst others she refused matrimonial offers from two sovereign princes of Germany, having felt an attachment for the count d'Estrées, an officer of the garrison at Weissemburg, who was young, intellectual, and in every respect worthy of her. The count respectfully expressed his wishes to the deposed monarch, who, being aware of his daughter's sentiments, promised to grant his consent to her marriage with him, provided Louis XV. would give him the title of duke and peer of France.

This favour, which was accorded some time after, was

refused at that time, but Marie always preserved the remembrance of her first attachment, and when queen, on receiving the duchess d'Estrées after her marriage, remarked, "Je pourrais être à la place de cette dame, et venir faire ici la révérence à la Reine de France."

When the duke of Bourbon had decided upon placing Marie Leckzinsky on the throne, the cardinal prince de Rohan, bishop of Strasbourg, was sent to Stanislaus to demand her hand in marriage. The dethroned monarch received this consoling offer in his retreat at Weissemburg, and, falling on his knees, energetically thanked God for the blessing he had vouchsafed him, and, embracing his daughter, joyfully informed her that she was queen of France. The duke of Orleans, son of the late regent, repaired to Strasbourg, and married the princess in the king's name, and the ceremony was performed by the cardinal de Rohan.

Louis XV. was accompanied by the court to Moret, and conducted the queen to Fontainebleau, where the marriage was realized in 1725.

Marie Leckzinsky was seven years older than the young king, who duly appreciated the excellence of her character. The first years of their marriage were not, like those of Louis XIV. and Maria Theresa, devoted to tournaments and public entertainments, but spent in comparative retirement; and Louis XV., who fondly

cherished his wife, left Versailles only to visit Rambouillet, the residence of the count of Toulouse, whose wife was a woman of polished manners and virtuous habits, and whose society accorded with her character, and was very agreeable to the king. They were all friends of the bishop of Fréjus, who was much gratified at his former pupil's choice of company; the duke of Bourbon was also pleased by it, because he was more at liberty to govern according to his own will; but numerous murmurs against his administration soon caused his disgrace, and the affairs of state passed into the hands of the king's old and attached preceptor Fleury, whom he made a cardinal.

The life of Louis XV., whose kingdom was skilfully governed by Fleury, was very monotonous; naturally timid, his whole pleasure consisted in the bosom of his family, and the nation became inert and indolent from the example of the court, and above all the monarch, whose apathy had been increased by the indulgence of it during his childhood, as his guardians had been always fearful of fatiguing his delicate constitution. Several of the elder courtiers, amongst others Villars and Fleury, remonstrated with him on the subject, and induced him to be more active. Louis, who was only sixteen years of age at the time of his marriage, was so much attached to his wife, that he beheld in her many charms which

she did not actually possess, so that, when prevailed on to enlarge his circle of society, it was not long before this happy illusion was destroyed by interested and ambitious courtiers.

The person who first tempted the young monarch to break his conjugal faith was Louisa Julia de Nesle, daughter of the marquis de Nesle, and of Louisa de la Porte Mazarin: she was born at Paris in 1710. At the age of sixteen she married her cousin Louis Alexandre de Mailly, and in 1729 succeeded her mother in the office of superintendent of the queen's household. The countess de Mailly was not beautiful, but she had much vivacity and highly polished manners; moreover, she possessed remarkable taste in dress. Her husband, who was displeased at the attendance of the king, remonstrated; upon which he was sent out of France by an appointment to an embassy.

This lady never exercised her influence over Louis to procure either wealth or aggrandizement for herself or her relatives, but she instilled most depraved principles into Louis's mind, and was the first to establish the *petits soupers*, which scandalized all the court. She had four sisters—Madame de Ventimille, the duchess de Languais, the marchioness de la Tournelle, and Madame de Flavacour. The youngest of them, who was at a convent, being dazzled with the power and influence of the

countess de Mailly, entreated her to take her to court, where she made successful efforts to please the king and supplant her sister ; she however died in giving birth to the count de Luc, in 1741.

After her death the duchess de Laraguais is said to have been the favourite, but she was soon discarded, and the countess de Mailly restored ; her favour did not, however, last long, as Louis manifested a much greater attachment for another of the marquis de Nesle's daughters, the marchioness de la Tournelle, and Madame de Mailly was obliged to resign her situation of superintendent of the queen's household, after which she lived in retirement. Converted by the eloquent and pious counsels of Père Renaud of the Oratoire, she became as virtuous and modest in her conduct as she had formerly been disreputable and immoral ; she expiated the scandal she had caused by rigid penance, and died, sincerely repenting her faults, in 1751, aged forty-two years.

The countess de Mailly, unlike most of the royal favourites, was never injurious to the state ; she neither bestowed favours nor exercised vengeance. Once only she participated in the affairs of the government, by energetically entreating the king to save the remains of the French troops in Bohemia, whom the old Cardinal Fleury had abandoned from motives of timid parsimony.

Her sister, Anne Mary de Nesle, who supplanted her,

was married at the age of seventeen to the marquis de la Tournelle, who left her a widow at twenty-three. This lady far surpassed all her sisters in personal charms ; she was also a talented musician. In 1742 Louis XV. gave her the appointment of *dame du palais* to the queen, who was condemned to be brought into contact with all her husband's favourites in consequence of their functions obliging them to have apartments in the palace.

The marchioness, on causing her sister's dismissal, persuaded Louis to give her a pension of thirty-six thousand francs a year, and pay her debts, which amounted to seven hundred and sixty thousand livres. She also obtained a pension of eighty thousand francs for herself, a splendid hôtel in Paris, and the title of duchess de Châteauroux.

In vain the queen, who dreaded new affronts on the appearance of a new favourite, endeavoured, with the assistance of the count de Maurepas and Cardinal Fleury, to maintain the cause of the countess de Mailly ; the duchess possessed an intriguing spirit, and easily subjugated the indolent monarch, who was not alarmed at the prospect of his mistress assuming the burden of state affairs.

As long as the king considered his queen the fairest and most amiable of women, Marie Leckzinsky was the happiest and most enviable of wives ; but when the cruel

truth of his changed sentiments became apparent to her, she sought to relieve her desolation by the resources which her well-cultivated mind afforded. She regulated her daily employment, rose early, attended mass, visited the king, received the princes and ambassadors, and then returned to her own apartments, where she amused herself with making crayon drawings and reading, and, with the aid of a small printing-machine, made impressions of prayers and moral precepts of her own composition. She partook of her repasts in public, in order that all who wished might see her, for she was universally esteemed and beloved. In her own apartments she superintended the making of every description of refreshments which were requisite for the sick-room of the poor, as well as all kinds of wearing apparel, from the cradle-robe to the coffin-shroud. She frequently caused a table to be laid for the workmen in the château, that she might have the pleasure of seeing them enjoy their repast. During a reign of forty-three years, Marie Leckzinsky never gave fêtes, because she said the people paid for them by the "sweat of their brow;" the expense of her marriage was the only charge the state was required to defray on her account.

Although her heart was daily breaking in consequence of the numberless infidelities and the altered character of her husband, Marie never permitted herself to reproach

him, or relinquished the moderation and gentleness which she always manifested towards him, but buried her sorrows in her own bosom, save when she poured them forth to heaven in her oratory.

The king's frequent absences often obliged the queen to receive the foreign ambassadors and dignitaries of the state ; but although she possessed talent, she never interfered in the administration. The duke of Bourbon having once asked her to take a more active part in the government, she replied, "*Les Français accordent tout aux femmes, excepté le droit de les gouverner.*"

While Marie Leckzinsky was pining in isolation for the loss of the affection of Louis XV., the duchess de Châteauroux was the sole possessor of it. But, though proud and ambitious, this favourite contrived to rouse him from his idleness and apathy. Like another Agnes Sorel, she urged him to put himself at the head of his army in Flanders and Alsace ; and his kingdom was indebted to his bravery and resolution for the victory of Fontenay.

In 1744 Louis XV. was attacked with a putrid fever at Metz, and was so dangerously ill that his life was despaired of. During his indisposition, the duchess de Châteauroux never quitted him, but attended him with most affectionate and anxious solicitude, assisted by the duke of Richelieu, first gentleman of the chamber. This

nobleman was desirous of concealing the king's dangerous state from him, in order, as he said, to spare him the terrors of death; but the duke de Chartres, who was first prince of the blood royal, assisted by Fitzjames, bishop of Soissons, the king's almoner, announced it to him, and the prelate exhorted him to prepare himself for the awful change which awaited him by first renouncing the sin of an illegitimate attachment. The king became resigned, and, although he declared his favourite was all that he regretted in the world, yielded to the bishop's solicitations, and sent the duchess an order for her departure by the count d'Argenson.

Although the duchess de Châteauroux was generally liked because her influence over the king had been exerted for his benefit as well as that of the nation, her departure was accompanied by great opprobrium on the part of the people, who believed that she had been instrumental in causing the king's malady; and this brilliant favourite, who entered Metz in triumph, could not find a carriage in which to leave the town: she was, therefore, provided with a conveyance and escort by the marshal de Bellisle; nevertheless she reached Paris at the risk of her life.

On her dismissal, the queen arrived at Metz to offer her attentions to the king, whom she found in an improved condition and desirous of repairing the injuries and injus-

tice he had done her. The people, who were delighted to find their sovereign restored to life and virtue together, proclaimed him the *bien-aimé*, and gave way throughout all France to inexpressible enthusiasm; on his return to Paris he was overwhelmed with demonstrations of affection, so that he inquired what he had done to merit so much love.

In the mean time the discarded duchess pined in obscurity, but Louis, who was surrounded by corrupt advisers, yielded to his natural weakness, and resumed his criminal habits. Notwithstanding his professions to the queen, he eagerly sought to make the duchess de Châteauroux forget the affront she had received at Metz, and accordingly obliged the count d'Argenson to present the letter of recall to her in person; and the bishop of Soissons, who had done nothing more than perform the strict line of duty which his ministry required of him, was exiled to his diocese. But this triumph of vice was of short duration; the joy that the duchess felt at her reinstatement, and some neglect in the care of her health, caused a physical revolution which destroyed her in a few days after her return to court. In vain her sister, Madame de Mailly, left her retreat to offer her the proofs of her affection and solicitude, and as vainly did Louis summon all the aid which his kingdom could produce; her death, which occurred in 1744, opened a

career for the marquis de Nesle's fifth daughter, Madame de Flavacour, but this lady repulsed the offers and professions of Louis XV. with laudable perseverance; her exemplary life was free from the storms which agitated those of her sisters, and she justified the friendship with which Marie Leckzinsky honoured her.

His own dangerous illness, and the duchess's sudden and melancholy end, was a fearful lesson for the king, but it was lost upon him. When engaged in his favourite amusement of hunting, he frequently met Madame Lenormand d'Etioles in the forest of Senart, near which that lady resided. Attracted by her grace and beauty, he sent her the produce of the chase, and, not content with this overture, invited her to a masked ball which was given by the Parisians to the dauphin in honour of his marriage with Maria Theresa, the Infanta of Spain, in 1744; and availed himself of the confusion of the fête to declare his passion.

Jane Antoinette Poissan was born at Ferté-sous-Jouarre, in 1722. Her father, who was victualler to the Hôtel des Invalides, was ruined through some dishonourable management, and obliged to seek another fortune in a foreign country, leaving his daughter in France with her mother, who possessed the means of giving her a brilliant education, aided by Lenormand de Tournehem,

under-steward of the farms belonging to the revenue, and one of her relations.

Mademoiselle Poissan was an excellent musician, and drew and engraved with much taste and accuracy. Her mother, who was of low origin, instilled into her mind the criminal idea of endeavouring to captivate the heart of the monarch, and with this view induced her to follow him to the hunt, where, by her graceful horsemanship, she could not fail to attract his notice. Although Madame Poissan often repeated that none but a prince was worthy of possessing a woman endowed with so many advantages as her daughter, she gave her in marriage to her nephew Augustus Lenormand d'Etiolles, who, on discovering the encouragement his young wife gave Louis XV., openly complained; but was appointed to the office of farmer-general to the revenue, with directions to be silent. His obsequious obedience to this command gave the king so much satisfaction, that he shortly after made him a royal equerry.

Madame d'Etiolles had a mixture of cunning and melancholy in the expression of her countenance; her complexion was very fair, and her figure, arms, and hands remarkably beautiful.

Louis at first provided her with a house at Versailles; but afterwards gave her apartments in the château, where each year her extravagances increased. Louis XV.,

though avaricious by instinct, was prodigal through weakness; he gave Madame d'Etioles six estates, besides splendid hotels in Paris, Fontainebleau, and Compiègne, where she amassed such a considerable quantity of furniture and other valuables, that after her death the sale occupied each day during the space of twelve months. He gave her a pension of fifteen hundred thousand livres, besides daily presents, independently of which she had six hundred thousand livres to enable her to have her table always served for the reception of her royal lover, who also created her marchioness of Pompadour.

The ceremony of her presentation at court took place with great *éclat*, the king having requested the princess de Conti to introduce her, and her respectful behaviour induced the queen to admit her occasionally at her table; but this undeserved honour was not long continued. After her own elevation, she directed her attention to that of her family. Her brother was named Marquis de Marigni, and the superintendent of public buildings. Louis XV. called this person *petit frère*, as the count Dubarri afterwards called him *frérot*.

In 1752 Madame de Pompadour received the title and office of *dame du palais*, very much in opposition to the wishes of the queen and many of the courtiers, not only because it was a post exclusively reserved for ladies holding the rank of duchess, but also because her

immoral conduct rendered her unfit for so honourable an appointment.

With the exception of the prince and princess of Conti, who were on friendly terms with her, the royal family visited her only to please the king. One of the chevaliers of Saint Louis was her equerry ; she always had young ladies of noble birth to wait on her ; and her daughter, when only fifteen years of age, had the equipage of a king's daughter, and was always called *Madame Alexandrine*, or *Mademoiselle*, like the princesses of the blood royal.

Madame de Pompadour, knowing Louis's aversion to business, resolved to relieve him of that burden, and assumed the reins of government herself : but, like Madame de Maintenon, either through mischance or a combination of circumstances, she was not fortunate in her choice of ministers ; perhaps submission and flattery formed the great merits of those whom they selected. In 1749 the marchioness dismissed the count de Maurepas, who was much beloved by the king, and had held the office of minister of marine for the space of twenty-seven years, because he wrote some insulting epigrams upon her, and gave the place to Monsieur de Bouillé, who knew nothing of naval affairs ; and, in opposition to the unanimous voice of the country, elevated the prince of Soubise to the dignity of Marshal of France,

and appointed him to a command, the result of which choice was the unfortunate defeat at Rosbach in the year 1756.

The marchioness de Pompadour possessed the talent of amusing the indolent king, who frequently remarked that she made the time pass quickly: in fact, she conceived the most ingenious artifices to divert him. At the expense of the revenue, she built a small house at Versailles, called the Hermitage, where she received the monarch sometimes in the garb of a milk-maid or shepherdess, at others in the guise of a gray-sister or abbess. Her occupations in the administration of public affairs did not prevent her from partaking of recreation. In all the royal residences she erected theatres, in which she sometimes performed herself. At Bellevue she played the part of Colette in "*Le Devin du Village*;" and to recompense Voltaire for an opera which he wrote for her, she gave him the titles of gentleman of the king's chamber and historiographer of France. She also tried to attach Jean Jacques Rousseau to her, but the indigent philosopher, to whom she sent a present of twelve louis-d'ors, refused to accept anything beyond the price of his work.

She loved literature and the fine arts, and encouraged and favoured Montesquieu, Buffon, Maupertuis, and all the literary characters of the period. She also carried

her love of luxury to a high degree, and by the introduction of voluptuous manners corrupted the court and town, and wasted the revenue, while she considered that she repaired these evils sufficiently by favouring the agricultural views of political economists.

The talents of this ambitious favourite cannot, however, be disputed. The illustrious Maria Theresa of Austria appreciated her judgment and influence; and, to obtain the co-operation of France with the view of recovering Silesia from Frederick II., king of Prussia, this proud descendant of Rodolph of Hapsbourg did not disdain to correspond with Madame de Pompadour, whom in her confidential letters she styled her *amie et bonne cousine*, and whose self-love the Prussian monarch had offended by some satirical remarks: she accordingly induced Louis XV. to forget the enmity which had existed between France and Austria for the space of two centuries, and the treaty of Vienna was the result of this reconciliation. Maria Theresa testified her acknowledgment and regard for the favourite by sending her her own portrait splendidly set in diamonds.

During the time that the marchioness de Pompadour was the distributor of all the royal gifts and government employments, it required but a little adulation to obtain her favour, but sarcasm or criticisms on her conduct she never forgave. Some flattering stanzas which the Abbé

Bernis addressed to her, purchased him her protection ; she gave him a bishopric, with a pension of six thousand livres, and afterwards elevated him to the post of minister of foreign affairs. Some years after, having heard that he had uttered some contemptuous remarks respecting her conduct, her resentment was unbounded, and she declared that she would replace him in the obscurity from which she had drawn him ; he was consequently disgraced and exiled. Amongst others who suffered for wounding her self-love was a young officer of the engineers named Latude, who, for composing some satirical lines upon her, was thrown into one of the dungeons of the Bastille, where he was detained a close prisoner for the space of thirty-five years.

On assuming the direction of public affairs, Madame de Pompadour considered it necessary to consolidate herself in her post of favourite. Politic in her projects, ambition supplied the place of love ; she was therefore never tormented with jealous fears ; but to secure herself from dangerous rivals who might have supplanted her, she built, in 1754, the *Parc aux Cerfs* near the forest of Satory at Versailles, where she assembled a number of young ladies, who had no merit beyond their personal attractions, to divert the passing affections of the indolent king. By this means the marchioness introduced corruption into numerous families, and Louis XV.,

who was the Christian king of a Christian country, despising morality and disregarding the contempt of all Europe, became the Sardanapalus of modern times, perverted all classes of society, and wasted upon these vulgar beauties sums of money which would for years have maintained numerous fleets and considerable armies. It is estimated that upwards of a hundred millions of francs were squandered upon this disgraceful establishment, which was suppressed in 1768. There exist a multitude of memoirs of this period of the life of Louis XV., the details of which would doubtless be better buried in oblivion than produced even with their due allowance of censure.

While private profligacy increased at court, public disorders augmented throughout the kingdom. There were troubles in the church, schisms among the bishops, agitations among the magistracy, discord among families, and disturbances among the people. In 1757 the king was stabbed on stepping into his carriage by a man named Damiens ; but the blow was not mortal : the ruffian confessed that he was urged to commit the crime by the general discontent. On receiving the news of this catastrophe, Madame de Pompadour left the palace, and the dauphin, who had always been kept in restraint by his father and unemployed in the affairs of state, was summoned to the council ; but when the general alarm for

the king's safety had dissipated, the favourite returned triumphantly, and the Count d'Argenson, who had loudly exulted at her fall, was immediately disgraced; after which few men of vigour or talent remained in the ministry.

The reverses of the French army, which were imputed to the consequences of the war of *Sept Ans*, were a subject of serious regret and melancholy to Madame de Pompadour, and interfered with the enjoyment of her power. Her anxiety on the occasion is observable in her letters; for the details of that war are no less inglorious to France than the motives for entering upon it were unjust, or the policy which directed it was imprudent.

For more than two years before her death she suffered from debility, and gradually sunk into the grave. Feeling the end of her shameful career approach when at Choisi, she caused herself to be removed to Versailles, and in 1764 finished her days in the king's palace, where the royal family alone have the privilege of dying. A few moments before her death, after arranging her dress, she sent for the curate of the parish, who administered the sacrament to her, and, after having performed his functions, was about to retire, when she said to him, "Attendez, monsieur; nous partirons ensemble," and expired. She was forty-two years of age at the time of her decease. Far from regretting her, Louis XV.,

who was then neither attached to her by esteem for her character nor admiration of her charms, which had faded, appeared glad to be freed by her death from any further occasion for committing crime. Alas! but a short interval elapsed before his courage was exhausted, notwithstanding the efforts of his amiable wife to win him back to the virtuous life he had so long abandoned. He displayed little emotion on seeing Madame de Pompadour's corpse pass beneath his windows when conveyed to her own hotel, and at the hour appointed for the funeral looked at the sky, and said, "*La marquise aura mauvais temps pour son dernier voyage.*" Nevertheless, during her illness he paid her unceasing attention, and always consulted her on political affairs: until her last moments she took an active part in the administration, and died with the reins of government in her hand. It is remarkable that Louis felt so little regret at his separation from a woman who for twenty years had borne the weight of government, unfortunate as her administration was for France, for no favourite had ever possessed such extensive power as the marchioness de Pompadour. Although Madame de Maintenon exercised her influence in directing the choice of ministers, Louis XIV., enfeebled as he was, never permitted her the exclusive right of governing; it was reserved for Louis XV. to offer to all Europe the example of a monarch who was

so contemptible as to abandon the sceptre which his birth had conferred on him into the hands of a mistress, and thus prove himself unworthy to bear it. It is but justice, however, to add, that she caused the erection of the *Ecole Militaire* and the manufactory of porcelain at Sèvres.

When she assumed the government of the state and the prerogatives of a queen, the frequent journeys of the court to Compiègne brought Marie Leckzinsky into such close contact with her, that the queen retired to the convent of the Carmelites in that town, which she endowed and was much attached to. She also favoured the Jesuits, and succoured them when banished, by requesting her father to afford them an asylum in Lorraine, and, after his death, entreated Louis XV. to permit them to remain there—a request which he granted. Amongst the literary characters whose society and works she valued were Monterief and Henaut.

Marie Leckzinsky attended to the education of her children with exemplary care, and was repaid by their amiable and dutiful conduct; but she had the misfortune to lose several. The duke of Anjou died at the age of two years and six months; in 1733 she lost the princess Marie, who also died young; and in 1752, the Princess Henrietta, who was twenty-four years of age. She was greatly afflicted at the death of the dauphin's first wife,

Maria Theresa, who died in her accouchement, but was consoled by the Dauphine Marie Josephine, who replaced her. This princess was the daughter of Augustus II., who had dethroned Marie Leckzinsky's father, Stanislaus. On her first introduction at the court of France, etiquette obliged her to wear, amongst other ornaments, a bracelet adorned with the portrait of her father. Marie Leckzinsky was unwilling to cast her eyes upon the resemblance of one who had been so bitter an enemy to her beloved parent, but resigned herself to the usual custom, not wishing her young daughter-in-law to think that animosity reigned in her heart; she therefore said to the timid girl, "*Ma fille, voilà donc le portrait de votre père?*" "*Oui, maman,*" replied the dauphine; "*voyez comme il est ressemblant!*" at the same time she placed it before the eyes of the queen, who beheld the portrait of her father Stanislaus. This little anecdote affords a proof of the amiable disposition of the princess, for whom Marie Leckzinsky entertained a sincere affection; but she had the misfortune to lose her virtuous son the dauphin in 1762, and the dauphine, worthy wife of so excellent a prince, survived him only fifteen months. She injured her health by her zealous assiduities to her husband during his illness, and the regret she felt at his loss, and the fatigue she underwent in educating her children, undermined her strength.

The same tomb at Sens contains the ashes of this amiable pair. The queen of France extended her benevolence to the other children of Augustus II., who in their turn were forced to expatriate, but at her solicitations received a safe asylum from Stanislaus in Lorraine.

The loss of these children, added to the grief she experienced at the unfortunate accident which caused her father's death, threw Marie Leckzinsky into a state of languor from which she never recovered. The old king, Stanislaus, who had been the idol of Lorraine for thirty years, fell a victim to an accident; the fire in his apartment having caught his dressing-gown at a moment when he happened to be alone, and his cries for assistance not having reached any of his attendants.

During the queen's illness, which assumed a serious appearance in 1768, the château was always surrounded with crowds of anxious inquirers, and Louis XV., who appreciated these marks of public respect, which were offered to virtue, exclaimed, "*Voyez donc comme elle est aimée!*" Her malady was of an extraordinary nature, as it entirely suspended the faculties of her mind, and gave her the appearance, even when awake, of being in an uneasy slumber. After she had breathed her last sigh, the king, whose esteem for his wife had never forsaken him, advanced towards the bed on which the corpse lay, and once more embraced the mother of his ten children.

After her death her dresses and other objects were cut in pieces and preserved by the people as precious relics; she was called *La Sainte Reine*, and during eight days her body lay in state to gratify the nation that so much venerated her. Monsieur Poucet de la Rivière, Bishop of Troyes, delivered her funeral oration at Notre Dame de Paris. An immense congregation, who had assembled on the occasion, forgetting in their enthusiasm the respect which was due to the sanctity of the church, burst forth into loud acclamations of applause, when the orator, addressing himself to the Archbishop of Paris, exclaimed, “Pontife du Dieu vivant, ne craignez pas d’offrir sur le tombeau de la reine un encens que nos neveux brûleront peut-être un jour sur ses autels.”

The union of Louis XV. with Marie Leckzinsky has been blamed as too modest, compared with the marriage originally determined on with the Infanta of Spain; it nevertheless added an important province to the kingdom, for, on the death of Stanislaus, Lorraine belonged by treaty to France, in compensation for the throne of Poland.

It might be supposed that the death of this excellent woman would have left a wholesome effect upon the king’s mind, but his intimacy with the countess Dubarri shows that he was insensible to any virtuous impressions except such as were of the most evanescent nature.

This lady, who was equally celebrated for her beauty, profligacy, and unfortunate end, was the daughter of a farmer named Gomart de Vaubernier, in Vaucouleurs, and was born in 1746. Her father having died, leaving his widow without fortune, she was obliged to enter service at Paris. Fortunately the young girl had a rich godfather named Dumonceau, who was in the commissariat department, and who undertook to defray the expenses of her education at the convent of Saint Aure, where he placed her. Thinking that he had accomplished his duty towards his goddaughter, Monsieur Dumonceau saw nothing of her after her education was completed, and Mademoiselle Gomart de Vaubernier, being without either an asylum or resources, obtained employment at a dress-maker's in Paris. The description of her occupations, the brilliant women whom she beheld, and the many indiscreet remarks upon her beauty which she was constantly in the habit of hearing, gave rise to the dreams of a romantic imagination, and disgusted her with her employment.

She was desirous of living in a less humble sphere, and imagined that her personal charms entitled her to wealth and prosperity. With such sentiments it was not long before Mademoiselle de Gomart fell into some of the many snares which beset the path of the inexperienced and friendless. One of her relations introduced her into the house of a lady of quality who had dissipated her fortune, and was endeavouring to retrieve it

by gambling. At one of this lady's suppers, the young girl, who had taken the name of Lange, attracted the attention of the count Dubarri, a gentleman of Gascony, who, finding her indifferent to his offers, gave his consent to her marriage with his brother. They were descendants of the ancient and noble house of Barrymore in Ireland; nevertheless the fear of tarnishing the name by so disproportionate an alliance was not taken into consideration, and the marriage took place in 1768.

The countess Dubarri was universally admired, and the report of her beauty reached the ears of Lebel, the king's valet-de-chambre, who lost no time in procuring her an interview with his royal master, upon whom her personal charms made a lively impression. She was possessed of little talent, and had no ambitious views, so that her frank and simple manners delighted him, and even those ladies at court who did not like her rendered justice to her candour, sweetness of temper, and complacency. It has also been remarked that, after she became attached to Louis XV., she never gave cause for suspecting her conduct or affection by the smallest act of indiscretion; but her prodigality was ruinous to France.

She always used gold plate, and possessed a cup of that metal of enormous value, which was given her by the king. The duke of Aiguillon, in order to render himself agreeable to the monarch, presented her with a

magnificent carriage which cost fifty-two thousand francs. On the day of her fête Louis XV. gave her a bouquet of diamonds valued at three hundred thousand francs, and also a dressing-table of massive gold, surmounted by two Cupids of the same metal holding a crown enriched with precious stones, and so ingeniously disposed that she could not look on the mirror without beholding herself crowned. On receiving the order for this extravagant piece of furniture, the astonished artist required the sum of four hundred marks in advance. Independently of these prodigalities, Madame Dubarri gave at play drafts for large sums at sight, which the abbé Terray and the court banker Beaujon paid with greater exactitude than the expenses of the government. To meet the exigencies of her husband and brother-in-law, the countess drew more than eighteen millions from the treasury, but she did not partake of that sum, and beyond the gifts of the king she made neither acquisitions nor savings.

As etiquette prevented her appearing at court without an introduction, Louis XV. resolved that she should be presented with all the usual ceremony: several ladies refused their patronage, but at length Madame du Béarn consented to render her this service; and from that time the countess made use of the royal carriages, dined with the king, received visits from the ambassadors, and

was present at all the great court entertainments. This favour to a woman whose origin was base, and who was encouraging the weak monarch to plunge into every species of prodigality and excess, dishonouring him still more than he had already dishonoured himself, and rendering him an object of profound contempt to his people, caused the retirement of Madam^e de Beauveau and the duchesses de Choiseul and Gremmont, who disdained to associate with Madame Dubarri; and several others followed their example. But Louis, forgetting all decency and the respect which he owed to his own family, brought her into close intimacy with the princesses; and there is every reason to believe that her objection to the favourite's society, and the fear of displeasing her father by a refusal to join in it, was the cause which determined his daughter Louisa to take the veil in the austere order of the Carmelites in 1770.

Although the princesses could not be present at the king's parties, at which the countess presided, without severe mortification, yet all frankly confessed their admiration of her beauty, elegance, and good-nature; and when, in 1770, Louis asked the dauphine, recently arrived in France, her opinion of the favourite, who was admitted at the princess's table, she replied with a tone of conviction that she thought her truly bewitching.

Although the countess had many enemies, yet, all-

powerful as she was, and often insulted and outraged, she was never known to revenge herself, but performed many acts of benevolence; and in this respect both merited and acquired many honourable friends. The prince of Condé and other noble families sought an alliance with hers; the duke of Richelieu and the Chancellor Maupeou called her *cousine*, and the duke of Orleans consulted her on a marriage which he projected with Madame de Montesson, desiring to obtain, through her, the king's consent to that union; upon which occasion Madame Dubarri said to him, "Allez, gros-père, épousez toujours . . . nous verrons ensuite . . . j'y suis moi-même fortement intéressée." These words are a sufficient proof that she hoped herself to be united to Louis XV.

In her elevated state the countess did not forget her former position, but generously sent for her godfather, Dumonceau, who had so cruelly abandoned her to herself without guidance or good counsel; the old man appeared at court, dreading the animosity of his goddaughter, but she loaded him with presents, and appeared to have forgotten that he had ever acted unkindly to her. She also entreated pardon for the count and countess Louerme, who were condemned to death for rebellion; the king hesitated on account of the serious nature of their offence, but she embraced his knees, and appealed so pathetically in their favour, that the monarch at length

raised her, saying, “Madame, je n’oublierai pas la première faveur que vous me demandez.” Far from assuming the haughty style of her predecessor, her manners were always simple, and unostentatious; her notes of invitation were usually terminated with these words, “Sa Majesté m’honorera de sa presence.”

Nevertheless she participated in the disgraceful familiarities which Louis XV. authorized in his palace, and which he encouraged by his example. Her frankness and thoughtless gayety greatly delighted the old monarch, whom she was in the habit of calling *La France*, and who frequently amused himself by watching the lively sports in which she joined with the young noblemen of the court. On one occasion he entered her apartment unannounced, and found her playing blind-man’s-buff with several of the courtiers, in the midst of whom was the Chancellor Maupeou in his robes, performing the part of *Colin Maillard*. It was by the instigation of this minister the parliament was exiled in 1771; and who also affixed the seals of the state upon the absurd brevet of governor of Lucienne, which was given by Louis XV. to Madame Dubarri’s little negro Zamor at one of her jovial suppers,—the ungrateful negro, whom it will be necessary to mention hereafter, under much more serious circumstances. Amongst other follies, one of the noblemen at court (the duke de Tresme), who was

deformed, and an object of the favourite's mirthful raileries, used to inscribe on his visiting cards, "*Le sapajou de Madame la Comtesse.*" These familiarities were sometimes carried to excess; and Madame Dubarri one day thoughtlessly seized a packet of sealed papers which lay on the king's *escritoir*, and in which she believed there was a letter written by Monsieur de Broglie in unfavourable terms of herself; the king endeavoured to take them from her, but she made him run several times round the council-chamber, and at length threw the packet of papers into the fire, when they were immediately consumed. The irritated monarch pushed her out of the room without speaking, but the countess threw herself at his feet, and with tearful eyes entreated his forgiveness, which was readily accorded.

Although so playful and frolicsome within the palace, in public Madame Dubarri was extremely reserved, and at that epoch a reserved exterior was seldom to be seen, and, when found, was considered a great merit; in fact, "*s'aimer sans plaisir, se livrer sans combat, se quitter sans regrets, traiter le devoir de faiblesse, l'honneur de préjugé, la délicatesse de fadeur; telles étaient les mœurs de ce temps où la séduction avait son code, et où l'immoralité était réduite en principes.*"

The king conducted the countess Dubarri to all the royal palaces successively, at each of which he gave

superb entertainments in her honour, and the deference which was paid her frequently amounted to adulation. At the camp of Compiègne several regiments rendered her the military honours which are due only to princesses of the royal blood.

She did not suffer these flattering attentions and splendid recreations to interfere with her duty to her mother, who lived in retirement in the convent of Saint Elizabeth, at Paris, under the name of the marchioness de Montrable, to whom she furnished the means of supporting this borrowed title, and visited regularly twice every month.

Her influence and power excited envy of several ladies at court,—amongst others, the duchess de Grammont, sister to the duke de Choiseul, prime minister of France, who was for some time on very friendly terms with the countess. The duchess excited the duke de Choiseul against the favourite, and induced him to endeavour to persuade the king to dismiss her; so that, notwithstanding her dislike to business and politics, she was obliged in self-defence to give her attention to them, and, sustained by the Chancellor Maupeou and the duke d'Aiguillon, as well as her own influence with the king, she succeeded in causing the duke to be exiled to Chantaloupe—Louis believing that he not only attempted to interfere with his domestic comfort, but also that he was

endeavouring to create a war with England. Having, however, no revengeful feelings, and being an enemy to every kind of dispute, she soon after permitted him to return to Versailles at the solicitation of the duchess de Grammont, but on condition that he should not appear at court. The duke de Choiseul himself renders justice to Madame Dubarri in his Memoirs, by remarking that “cette femme n’était pas faite pour connaître l’excès de la haine.”

The countess Dubarri had nevertheless one ambition, which was to procure the dissolution of her marriage at Rome, hoping, like Madame de Maintenon, to be solemnly united in marriage to Louis XV.; her chances of success were more numerous than that lady’s, Madame Dubarri being still young as well as beautiful; but she was a stranger to intrigue, without which it was impossible to obtain an object so difficult. Her hopes in that respect were repeated to the royal family, whose dislike to her naturally increased in consequence. She also had the imprudence to declare in presence of the dauphine that none but Frenchwomen possessed graceful manners; and that princess could not pardon so great a breach of politeness. Nevertheless, by her beauty and amiable manners she maintained her empire over the monarch and her influence at court, until Louis XV. was attacked with the small-pox, when, finding his last

hour approach, and wishing to avoid a repetition of the occurrences which took place at Metz at the dismissal of the duchess de Châteauroux, the dying king especially recommended his favourite to the care of the duchess d'Aiguillon, and begged her to withdraw her from that afflicting spectacle ; but Madame Dubarri entreated permission to remain.

A few hours before Louis XV. expired the duchess d'Aiguillon separated the countess from her royal benefactor, and accompanied her to the château of Ruel, where she was informed of the king's death, which occurred in the year 1774. It was in this residence that the duke de la Vrillière presented her the *lettre-de-cachet* which exiled her to the abbey of Pont-aux-Dames near Meaux. This letter, which was sent her by Louis XVI., allowed her but one attendant, and all her correspondence was subjected to the scrutiny of the abbess of the convent. Confined to the monastery, Madame Dubarri neither murmured herself nor gave any cause of complaint to her companions, being there, as when at court, amiable and gentle to all ; but the monotony of the cloister attacked her temperament and personal appearance. She was treated during the early part of the reign of Louis XVI. with a degree of rigour which was highly disrespectful to the memory of the late king, but she nevertheless entertained the same sincere attachment

and fidelity for the august family which tyrannized over her in so contemptible a manner, when decency at least required that she should remain uninjured.

At length, in 1776, Louis XVI., admiring her resignation, permitted her to leave her retreat and occupy her estate of Lucienne; and the pleasure of being restored to her friends and the world renewed her health. Her most intimate associates were Madame Mortemarte and Madame d'Angivilliers, the painter Lebrun, and the duke d'Aiguillon. The Emperor Joseph II., during his visit to Paris, went to visit her at Lucienne, and when walking in the gardens offered her his arm, which she hesitated to accept; the emperor insisted courteously, adding, "*La beauté, madame, est toujours reine.*" In her retreat of Lucienne, Madame Dubarri was universally beloved by her neighbours of all classes: accompanied by her young friend the duke of Cossé Brissac, son of the governor of Paris, she delighted in performing acts of charity to the poor inhabitants of the surrounding hamlets.

In 1790 France was in revolution, and the countess's resources were in consequence very much weakened; she was therefore obliged to sell a great quantity of her plate and jewels. One night three men in military dresses entered her apartment and boldly demanded her treasures; terrified, and forbidden on pain of death to summon assistance, she gave them a jewel-case contain-

ing valuables to the amount of four hundred thousand francs, and a purse containing five hundred double louis-d'ors. This misfortune, however, might have been a means of safety by which Madame Dubarri could have escaped her destiny, for the theft had been extensively advertised, and the London papers soon afterwards announced that the authors of it had been discovered and arrested in that city. She accordingly repaired to England in order to acknowledge and claim her diamonds, and while in London kindly received and befriended several of the *gardes-du-corps* who were wounded in the royal cause on the 5th and 6th of October, and who had been obliged to fly from France, and even many emigrants who had been her greatest enemies during her days of triumph.

She would have done well had she remained in that peaceable country, but her affection for the duke de Brissac, and her wish to assist and console the faithful royalists, induced her to return to France, in opposition to the advice of Pitt, who was then in the English ministry.

She enjoyed but a few bright days of security after her return to Lucienne, and those were spent in kind attentions to the *garde-dus-corps* who escaped the massacres; she gave them an asylum, and paid them unceasing attentions, so that the queen warmly expressed her thanks. It was on that occasion that Madame

Dubarri addressed the respectful and affecting letter to Marie Antoinette, in which with equal delicacy and generosity she offered her all that she possessed, not as a gift, but as a restitution. "Ces jeunes blessés," she wrote, "n'ont d'autres regrets que de n'être point morts pour une princesse aussi digne de tous les hommages que l'est votre majesté. Ce que je fais pour ces braves est bien au-dessous de ce qu'ils méritent. Je les console, et je respecte leurs blessures quand je songe, madame, que sans leur dévouement votre majesté n'existerait peut-être plus ! Lucienne est à vous, madame : n'est pas votre bienveillance qui me l'a rendu ? Tout ce que je possède me vient de la famille royale ; j'ai trop de reconnaissance pour l'oublier jamais. Le feu roi, par une sorte de pressentiment, me força d'accepter mille objets précieux avant de m'éloigner de sa personne ; j'ai eu l'honneur de vous offrir ce trésor du temps des notables ; je vous l'offre encore, madame, avec empressement. Vous avez tant de dépenses à soutenir, et de bienfaits sans nombre à répandre ! Permettez, je vous en conjure, que je rende à César qu'est à César."

The queen did not accept her offer, but she was sensibly affected by it, as also at the extreme delicacy with which it was made, and at the care the countess bestowed

on those who were wounded and sacrificed for her own safety and that of her royal husband.

The revolution rapidly advanced, the whole kingdom was in a state of anarchy, and Madame Dubarri became an object of suspicion to the committee of Marly, among the members of which were an Irishman named Grieve, who coveted her estate of Lucienne, her negro Zamor, whom she had so long protected and cherished, and some other domestics not less ungrateful. Twice she was arrested by order of Grieve, and twice pronounced innocent by the Convention, upon a memorial signed by the greater number of the citizens of Marly and Lucienne, and by the interference of the chief magistrate of Lucienne and Goujon.

The charm of Madame Dubarri's last days consisted in solacing the unfortunate. She was the only consolation of Auguste de Rohan-Chabot, who wrote to her from prison, "*Il n'est plus de bonheur qu'avec vous ; venez voir un mortel qui vous aimera jusqu'à la fin de sa vie. Je baise mille fois le portrait de la plus charmante femme qu'il y ait au monde, et dont le cœur si noble et si bon mérite un attachement éternel.*"

One night, Maussobré, the duke de Brissac's aide-de-camp, arrived at Lucienne in great distress, and informed the countess Dubarri that the king's troops were disbanded, and the duke arrested. She had hardly time to

conceal the aide-de-camp before a loud noise was heard, a detachment of Marseillais penetrated into her dwelling, and, after having become intoxicated in her cellars, ransacked the house, and discovered the secret door which conducted to Maussobré's asylum, from which they drew and pitilessly manacled him. In the mean time other ruffians arrived, and one of them presented Madame Dubarri with the head of the unfortunate duke de Brissac, who had been assassinated at Versailles. At the sight of it she fell down senseless. The young commander had both time and opportunity to escape, but, instead of profiting by them, he employed those precious moments in writing an affectionate letter to the countess, and in making his will, in which he bequeathed her a part of the fortune he inherited from his father.

Grieve seized all her papers, and she was conveyed to the same chamber that had been occupied by the queen in the Conciergerie, where, loaded with irons, and awaiting her own destiny, she had the last melancholy consolation of learning that Lavallerie, the chief magistrate of Versailles, had precipitated himself into the Seine, from the despair of not having had it in his power to save her. When taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal, she offered to give up all her wealth; but Grieve and Zamor, who had taken possession of the château at Lucienne, declared that she corresponded with several

emigrants; that they had found the portraits of Louis XV., the regent, and Anne of Austria in her possession, and moreover that the English minister Pitt was interested in her.

During her trial, in which she was sustained by the presence of her courageous advocate Cheveau-Lagarde, she replied to the interrogatories of the president Dumas with precision and coolness. After summing up the evidence, the president concluded with these words: "*La conspiratrice qui est devant vous pouvait, au sein de l'opulence acquise par ses charmes, vivre heureuse dans une patrie où était enseveli avec son amant le souvenir de sa prostitution; mais la liberté du peuple était un malheur à ses yeux; il fallait qu'elle fût toujours esclave, et qu'elle rampât encore sous des maîtres.*"

Convicted of corresponding with the enemies of the republic, she was condemned to death, and her goods declared to be the property of the nation in 1793. On hearing her doom pronounced, she fainted, and was carried to her prison in a state of insensibility.

Although encouraged by the exhortations and example of several of her companions in misfortune, the countess uttered such lamentable cries, that the officers were obliged to quicken the speed of the vehicle which conveyed the condemned party, lest her piteous exclamations should excite the compassion of the people. At

the last moment her senses appeared to forsake her ; she entreated the executioner for a little delay in a supplicating tone ; but he seized her by her arms, forcibly inclined her head, and, before the unhappy countess could invoke the Supreme pity, it rolled on the scaffold.

Thus did this celebrated favourite expiate her ephemeral prosperity and her faults, which were of a nature to render her name odious, but which in all probability would never have been committed had she possessed one friend to preserve her from the temptations which beset the path of her youth.

The count d'Allonville, who saw her after the death of Louis XV., remarks, in his "*Mémoires Secrets*," that, prejudiced against her, his first motive for visiting her was curiosity, but that interest soon succeeded to it ; that on examination he could not reconcile that which he had heard of her and that which her countenance announced ; there was no trace of her former condition or mode of life in the decency of her tone or the nobleness and refinement of her manners and deportment, which were equally free from pride and humility, license and prudery, and that the sight of her alone almost refuted all that had been published against her.

It is to be regretted that Madame Dubarri's courage failed her in her last moments, at the period when so many victims of her own sex so eminently distinguished

themselves. But this weakness would not perhaps have been so remarkable, had it not been for the astonishing heroism of the Frenchwomen at this disastrous epoch.

Before she became acquainted with Louis XV. she had one daughter, to whom she gave a dower of a hundred thousand francs, and married her to a gentleman who possessed neither wealth nor noble birth. This lady is the mother of two children, with one of whom (her daughter) she resides at Munich; the other is a major-general in the Russian service, under the title of the marquis de Boissason.

QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE.

(Reign of Louis XVI.)

MARIE ANTOINETTE JOSEPHINE JANE DE LORRAINE, daughter of Francis I., emperor of Germany, and of the empress Marie Thérèse, queen of Hungary and Bohemia, was born at Vienna, on the day of the great earthquake at Lisbon, in 1755. Her mother paid great attention to her education, and appointed the celebrated Abbé Metastasio to teach her Italian, Gluck to give her lessons in music, and the Abbé Vermond to instruct her in the language of that country of which she was destined to be the sovereign.

At the time of her husband's accession, the revolution was preparing. Louis XVI., who was a liberal, and a partisan of reasonable reform, endeavoured to ameliorate the condition of the people ; but their movements were too rapid. Ambition reigned in all hearts and anarchy in all heads ; they had no guides but their momentary interests and disorderly passions, and were totally blind to events which were equally near and disastrous. The finances, which had been exhausted by the pomp of Louis XIV. and the culpable extravagance of Louis XV., were a sore which could be healed only by sacrifices on the part of the nobility and clergy ; but these sacrifices were not made, and the monarchy was overturned. In vain Louis XVI. endeavoured to improve the condition of his unfortunate inheritance by imposing domestic privations on himself and his family ; his single efforts were insufficient, and they were not seconded. One of his relations, whose susceptibility the monarch had involuntarily wounded, and an eloquent and ambitious orator, disseminated destructive principles throughout a nation then but indifferently enlightened, and consequently credulous, as well as eager after novelty. These were the principal causes of that impetuous movement which carried all before it amidst bloodshed and ruin, but which eventually produced great men and great events. It was to occupy this difficult position that Marie Antoinette renounced the peaceful

palace of her fathers, when Choiseul, prime minister of France, wishing to consolidate the peace between France and Germany, and, above all, to secure to himself the favour of the approaching reign, conceived the project of uniting the grandson of Louis XV. to the daughter of the illustrious Marie Thérèse. Nevertheless there were many in France who objected to an alliance with the house of Austria, and the Princess Adelaide strongly opposed the union of her nephew with the archduchess; but the views of the minister having prevailed, the young princess was asked in marriage by the duke de Rohan, in the name of the dauphin.

In 1770, at the age of fifteen, Marie Antoinette was conducted to Kehl, where she was met by the dignitaries who were charged to receive her, as also the duchesses de Cossé and de Noailles, ladies of honour. Louis XV. proceeded with a brilliant cortége to Compiègne, where the young dauphin and his affianced wife first met. The marriage was celebrated in the chapel of Versailles, and Louis the XV. gave the dauphine many rich presents, among others the necklace of large pearls that Anne of Austria bequeathed to the queens of France. Preparations were made for magnificent fêtes in Paris, but a sinister omen plunged the royal family into great consternation, in consequence of the scaffolding which was erected for the purpose of the fireworks having taken fire.

This event threw great confusion into the immense crowd that was assembled on the occasion, who, terrified, and pressed by the carriages that had no egress, were precipitated into the issues of the Place Louis XV., which had been left uncovered in the Rue Royale, when three hundred persons were either trodden under foot or suffocated.

The dauphin and his bride, who arrived from Versailles gay and happy at the time the catastrophe occurred, were sensibly afflicted by it, and could find no consolation for this disastrous event but in personally conveying succour to the wounded and dying. It was in the performance of these kindly actions that the young dauphine first made herself the object of universal idolatry. Foreigners as well as Frenchmen have rendered her sincere and just homage, although some of the elder courtiers, enemies of Austria, and the dauphin's aunts especially, spied and criticised her actions with much acrimony. The celebrated Burke, in speaking of her, thus expresses himself: "It is now sixteen or eighteen years since I saw the queen of France (then dauphine) at Versailles; a more celestial apparition never shone on this orbit, which she scarcely appeared to touch. She glittered like the morning star, full of life, brilliancy and happiness." Sir William Wraxall also, in speaking of this princess, said, "In the summer of 1776, when I left France, Marie Antoinette had attained the highest degree of her beauty

and prosperity. Her eulogium was in every mouth, from the courtier to the shop-keeper, and La Harpe did but echo the public voice, when he composed her portrait in the following verses :—

“ Le ciel met dans ses traits cet éclat qu'on admire.
 France, il la couronna pour ta félicité.
 Un sceptre est inutile avec tant de beauté,
 Mais à tant de vertus il fallait un empire.’ ”

One of her first acts as queen, in 1774, exhibited the natural generosity of her disposition. Monsieur de Pontecoulant, major of the *gardes-du-corps*, had previously given her some offence, and consequently, on the accession of Louis XVI., considered it necessary to tender his resignation; but Marie Antoinette obliged him to withdraw it, saying, “La reine ne se souvient des querelles de la dauphine, et c'est moi qui prie Monsieur de Pontecoulant de ne plus songer à ce que j'ai oublié.” She also generously renounced a tax which had been paid by the nation on the accession of each queen, from time immemorial, and known under the name of the *Ceinture de la Reine*; after which the poets said with truth, that, possessed of the girdle of Venus, any other was unnecessary.

Marie Antoinette was not decidedly beautiful when her features were examined separately; her attractions consisted in the expression of the *ensemble*, in the elegance of her form, the brilliancy of her complexion, the

lightness of her step, the dignity of her deportment, and the grace which accompanied her smallest movements. Her hair was light, her eyes blue, her nose aquiline, and her mouth small; but the lower lip was prominent,—a fault which was characteristic of the princes of her family. She was not possessed of much talent; nevertheless she charmed those with whom she conversed, because the purity of her thoughts furnished her with appropriate expressions.

She could not endure flattery, and would never listen to scandal, for she considered it a duty to forget injuries, and an enjoyment to do good. Naturally simple, Marie Antoinette did not like the artificial manners of the court. She called Madame de Noailles, her *dame d'honneur*, *Madame l'Etiquette*. “Nous aimons,” says a contemporary writer, “la voir tantôt se promener à Marly, au lever de l'aurore, avec le jeune duc de Chartres; tantôt allant à l'opéra en fiacre; une autre fois respirant l'air frais de la nuit, et daignant causer sous le voile de l'incognito avec un commis de la guerre.” But the queen was surrounded with secret enemies, who blamed her for not preserving a more dignified exterior and submitting to the exigencies of her rank. Doubtless the simplicity of her taste was praiseworthy, but, exposed to the bitter remarks and criticisms of the court, she

should not have discarded the customs of the royal residence.

After her accession to the throne, she founded an hospital for the aged and poor at Versailles, and, in 1778, another for poor lying-in women, although she received only four hundred thousand francs a year, the same as Louis XIV.'s wife; but the value of money had greatly decreased since the time of Marie Thérèse. Among other acts of Marie Antoinette's benevolence, history mentions the erection of twelve cottages at Versailles, in which she placed twelve poor families, whom she supported and frequently visited.

In 1778, after a marriage of eight years, the queen gave birth to Madame Royale, who afterwards married the son of Charles X.; but she had hardly tasted of maternal joy when she lost her mother, the illustrious Maria Thérèse, and was so much afflicted at the event, that she was attacked with a serious illness, which confined her to her apartment for some time. The birth of the dauphin, which occurred in 1781, consoled her for the loss of her parent, and from that time she became interested in political affairs, and exercised her influence over the king and her brother the emperor Joseph II., to prevent a war from breaking out between France and Austria.

None rejoiced more cordially in the glory which

France, in the opinion of her people, acquired by the American war, than Marie Antoinette; those who had distinguished themselves were nobly received and warmly welcomed by her; amongst others, Lafayette and Lameth, one of whom was indebted to her for a wealthy marriage, and the other for the commission of a general officer.

The queen has, however, been severely reproached because her circle of acquaintance was too circumscribed; she had chosen an intimate society in which all wished to join, and jealousy and hatred were the consequence. The good Marie Leckzinsky had also her circle of acquaintance, amongst whom were the count de Tessen, the president Hainault, and some other persons of talent, and none ventured to find fault with her; but that neglected queen lived in a time when the sovereign and court were spoken of with timid respect, and that time no longer existed. Marie Antoinette was on terms of close intimacy with the princess de Lamballe, and the duchess de Polignac, whose husband annually received two hundred and ninety-two thousand francs from the treasury of the state, although it was so much involved. With these friends the queen amused herself by giving domestic fêtes, sledge-racing, evening concerts, family excursions to balls and the opera, and private theatricals in which the noblemen and ladies of the court performed. Malevolence misconstrued these diversions, and gave a

false colouring to amusements which were perfectly innocent; her enemies declared that her dislike to etiquette arose from a wish to veil her conduct, which she feared to expose. Perhaps during the early part of her marriage she did not display much warmth of affection for Louis XVI., who devoted most of his time to the education of his children, the chase, and mechanical works; but maternal love and friendship filled the heart of Marie Antoinette, and notwithstanding the many insinuations that have been circulated against her by her numerous calumniators, there is no foundation for one of them.

By her marriage contract she was to have a private establishment of her own, as many of the queens of France had before her, especially Catherine and Marie de Medicis, who built and resided, the former in the Tuileries, and the latter in the Luxembourg. To provide Marie Antoinette with a palace of her own, five million francs were given for the estate of Saint Cloud; and if this acquisition was a fault, considering the condition of the finances, it must be imputed to the minister Colonne, who deceived her in respect of the resources of the treasury. Her extravagances have been spoken of by her enemies, but none about her were more simply attired; and the charge of her having sent money to her family is equally absurd, because their finances were in a much more flourishing condition than

those of France. Her habits were far from luxurious ; she was never known to gamble, and seldom made any acquisitions of furniture or equipages.

One of the accusations brought against her at the Revolutionary Tribunal was, that at Trianon her bed was composed of white damask satin, which had been formerly occupied by Madame Dubarri, and was, moreover, very antiquated. Such is the testimony of those who were near the queen's person and had opportunities of witnessing her actions ; but the general mind was hostile to her ; she was accused of too great an attachment to Austria, and reproached for the treaty which was signed in 1785 between Joseph II. and the United States, through the mediation of France, which agreed to pay the emperor four millions and a half of florins, with the view of avoiding a general war. The people were witness to the amount sent, but malevolence doubled the sum.

Another unfortunate circumstance occurred to lend arms to malignity ; and the episode of the diamond necklace, which was a notorious fraud effected in the queen's name, augmented the number of her enemies. This event, which proved so fruitful in its results, was the effect of an intriguing woman's baseness, the underhand dealings of some persons who were near the throne, the shortsightedness of the court, and, above all, the incon-

ceivable prejudices which the people entertained against a princess endowed with qualities which would have rendered her an object of love, had they been appreciated.

Boehmer and Bassange, the jewellers of the crown, after having collected a great number of very valuable diamonds, composed a necklace the worth of which was enormous: in 1785 they offered it to the queen for the sum of sixteen hundred thousand francs; she expressed her admiration of its beauty, but unhesitatingly replied that she would rather that the king armed two vessels of the line with that amount than spend it on a necklace; it being the epoch in which America was struggling for her independence.

The cardinal prince de Rohan, who entertained culpable sentiments for Marie Antoinette, had displeased her by a correspondence in which he had treated the empress Marie Thérèse with disrespect, and, wishing to recover the queen's favour, had the imprudence to confide the secret of his passion to the wife of one of the *gardes-du-corps*, named Lamotte, who pretended to have been descended from the family of Valois. This woman was the daughter of a man who was plunged in vice as well as misery from the effects of his profligate habits, and had been dismissed from a corps of gendarmes to which he belonged for having negotiated false letters of exchange. In order to dupe the cardinal, Madame Lamotte

flattered his pride, persuaded him that she had private interviews with the queen on secret affairs, and informed him that the queen was desirous of procuring the necklace without the king's knowledge. The cardinal seized the occasion of performing the queen a service by secretly procuring an object worthy of her, and negotiated the affair with Bochner. He accordingly presented the jeweller with a document containing a promise of partial payment at stated periods, which the queen was to procure by economies on her own annuity, and which promissory note was given him by Madame Lamotte, and signed *Marie Antoinette* by an accomplice of that lady named Retaux de Villette. The valuable necklace was therefore deposited in the hands of the prelate, who commissioned his confidante to convey it to the queen, whom she pretended to have frequent interviews with, and promised, on receiving it, to procure one for him. The necklace had no sooner fallen into her hands than this perfidious woman broke it, and sent her husband to England with the diamonds, for which he obtained a considerable sum of money. A short time after Madame Lamotte, who was born in indigence, and possessed nothing, astonished her acquaintance by her luxury and extravagance.

In the mean time the cardinal de Rohan expected to be recompensed with the promised interview for his ser-

vices in the affair, and Madame Lamotte was therefore obliged to continue the intrigue. The queen was frequently in the habit of taking evening walks, and giving fêtes champêtres in the gardens of Trianon, which were illuminated on those occasions, and was always accompanied by those persons whom she honoured with her intimacy. At one of these evening diversions Madame Lamotte placed a young lady named Oliva in an obscure grove, and promised her fifteen thousand francs if she would personate the queen; she then announced to the cardinal in a mysterious manner that her majesty would grant him an interview, and on this first occasion would only present him her hand. The delighted cardinal suffered himself to be conducted to an isolated part of the gardens, where a closely veiled woman presented her hand to him with dignity; the prelate kissed it with transport, when she made a sign for him to retire, after pronouncing these words in a low tone of voice: “Vous pouvez espérer que le passé sera oublié.”

Nevertheless the favours with which the cardinal had been decoyed were not renewed, and he was consuming himself with vain hopes, when the time for the dénouement of this deplorable intrigue arrived; the term assigned for the payment of the necklace having passed unnoticed, the jewellers sent a memorial to Marie Antoinette supplicating for a part of the money. The asto-

nished queen instantly commanded their presence, and they assisted in explaining the odious plot. She immediately repaired to the king's apartment, and demanded justice for the injury that had been done her by cardinal de Rohan. This prelate had just concluded his daily functions as grand almoner at Versailles, and was still clad in his pontifical robes, when summoned before the monarch. The queen challenged him to speak the truth with just and energetic indignation: "Monsieur le Cardinal," she said, "mettez la main sur la conscience, et dites si ce n'est pas depuis quatre ans la première fois que je vous parle?" Summoned to reply, the cardinal avowed his error, and tremblingly declared how he had been deceived by the countess Lamotte Valois. He was immediately arrested and conveyed to the Bastille, but before his papers were secured he had sufficient time to give orders in German to his Hungarian valet to burn several, which he designated to him. Madame Lamotte avowed her crime, and the parliament acquitted the cardinal in 1786: Retaux de Villette was condemned to banishment; Lamotte to the gallows; and his wife to be scourged, branded with a hot iron, and to spend the remainder of her days in solitary imprisonment.

This event did not in the least diminish the confidence which Louis XVI. had in his wife, but it left profound and serious traces on the public mind, under the political

circumstances in which France was at that time placed. All Europe was interested in the miserable affair, though the innocence of the queen was not for a moment doubted by upright individuals; and that which appears really inconceivable in this swindling transaction is, that, after the authors of it were found guilty by their own avowal as well as by the fruits of their theft, it should have been still considered necessary to exculpate the queen from an accusation the nature of which alone rendered it quite absurd: but the affair of the diamond necklace was for Marie Antoinette one of those inevitable fatalities which accompanied her from misfortune to misfortune, until her last moment.

After this unfortunate event the queen, who was surrounded with enemies, and basely persecuted by an ambitious faction, lost so much respect and consideration that a woman well bred, but not noble, to whom Marie Antoinette inconsiderately applied for some information relative to a course of suppers she was giving, presumed to invite her to join them. It was doubtless an act arising from deplorable ignorance, but a party took notice of the circumstance for the purpose of auguring the most injurious suspicions against the innocent queen, whose momentary thoughtlessness drew on her this insolent proposition.

In 1789 the queen received some marks of public

homage on the opening of the States General, but the voices that were friendly to her were soon drowned by indignities and menaces which wounded her pride without destroying her courage.

The report of her injuries resounded throughout Europe, and the queen of Naples, and her brother the Emperor Joseph II., entreated her to escape from the dangers which they foresaw. Though many of her courtiers had already emigrated, Marie Antoinette would not follow their example, but steadfastly refused to quit the king, and decided on fulfilling her duties of wife and mother, however serious the result. In one of her letters to her brother, Joseph II., she remarked that "a good and fond mother" (which she herself was in an eminent degree) "has no country but the one in which the fate of her children is necessarily fixed."

In the midst of the political agitations of the year 1789 she lost the dauphin; the death of the Princess Sophie Hélène in 1787 had already decreased the number of her children. Her afflictions were also augmented by the departure of her friend the duchess de Polignac. This lady was elegant in manners, modest in deportment, and of excellent reputation. Her numerous charms interested the queen, who became fondly attached to her, and this friendship between two women worthy of one another ended but with death. Their affection

was increased by the duchess having accepted the place of governess to the royal children, which charge she executed with the utmost confidence. Her house was in a manner the queen's house, for it was there that that august princess's circle of friends were most frequently in the habit of associating.

A favourite is always considered a political enemy, and Madame de Polignac, like her friend, was calumniated; moreover, she was accused of having too great an influence over political affairs and the nomination of appointments. After the insurrection of the 14th of July, in which Polignac and Sombreuil had been insulted and attacked in the gardens of the Palais Royal by the multitude, and had succeeded in putting several to flight, the queen trembled for her friend, who was personally designated for the poniards of the assassins, and whom she expected the king would be called upon to give up to their revolutionary judgment. She therefore sent for the duchess on the day following, and entreated her to fly during the night. Madame de Polignac obstinately refused to do so, declaring that she would share the fate of Marie Antoinette, who, shedding torrents of tears, said to her, "To-morrow the king goes to Paris, and if they ask him! . . . I have everything to dread for you! . . . In the name of friendship, fly while there is yet time! Remember that you are a mother:" and the king

having entered at the moment, she added, "Come, sire, assist me in persuading my faithful friends that they must leave us."

The king seized the hand of the duke, who had accompanied his wife, and said, "Yes, follow the queen's counsel: it must be so; I beg it of you, and if it is necessary, I command you." They accordingly obeyed, and at midnight, when the duchess de Polignac was ready for her departure, she received the following short note from the queen: "*Adieu, la plus tendre des amies Que ce mot est affreux; mais il est nécessaire Adieu! je n'ai que la force de vous embrasser.*" Thus was dissolved the most tender and pure of habitual connexions, which had existed for the space of fifteen years.

The court became melancholy and silent, and Marie Antoinette's hair whitened with the effects of fear and sorrow; nevertheless, adversity gave her prudence, but never diminished her courage. To increase the evils, scarcity arrived, and that was also attributed to the monarch. The queen, whose only pleasure consisted in her correspondence with her brother, Joseph II., and the duchess de Polignac, lost even that gratification, for she was too closely watched to be enabled any longer to communicate with her friend, and death robbed her of the emperor. The only devoted friend that remained to her was the good and beautiful princess de Lamballe, who left Aix-la-Chapelle to console Marie Antoinette for

the absence of her other exiled favourite. In vain those who were attached to her threw themselves on their knees and endeavoured to dissuade her from going to Versailles. "La reine me désire," she replied; "je dois vivre et mourir près d'elle." The atrocious details of the assassination of this devoted and noble princess are too well known.

The revolution ripened rapidly, and the royal residence was menaced by an immense number of intoxicated men and women armed with pikes, who assembled at Paris, and proceed to attack Versailles. General Lafayette followed them at the head of eight thousand men of the National Guard, but appeared too late to paralyze the efforts of the assassins, who had already taken possession of the courts of the château. Enclosed in their palace with a small number of faithful servants, the royal family were for ten hours defended by the courage of the gardes-du-corps, who patiently endured injuries and blows which the king forbade them to return. The rioters soon found their way into the palace, loudly demanding the head of the Austrian. Two of the gardes-du-corps, named Du Repaire and De Miomandre, defended the door of the queen's chamber, and by their courageous and prolonged resistance gave her time to take refuge in the king's apartment. At length the unhappy Louis XVI., seeing the extreme danger of his position, was desirous of send-

ing his wife and children out of the country, but Marie Antoinette refused to abandon him.

In 1790 the royal family were forced to quit Versailles and proceed to Paris under an escort of upwards of thirty thousand individuals armed with swords, cutlasses, halberds, and even sticks ; and during the journey, which lasted seven hours, they constantly held up on pikes before the queen's eyes the heads of the gardes-du-corps who had perished in the service of her family ; while intoxicated women, seated on cannons, with dishevelled hair and disordered dresses, sang obscene songs, and addressed insulting language to her. Marie Antoinette displayed much dignity and courage throughout this trying scene ; she sat holding the dauphin on her knee, endeavouring to soothe his terrors, but without the power to give him the bread he asked for. Nevertheless, when the judges of the Châtelet interrogated her respecting the offences which were committed in her sight, she replied, "*J'ai tout vu, et tout oublié.*"

Confined in the Tuileries as in a prison, the queen devoted herself to the education of her children, and endeavoured to strengthen those family ties which she foresaw would soon be broken. At length the king, who had lost all hope of preserving his throne, yielding to the wishes of his devoted friends, who had contrived a method of retreat, consented, in 1791, to quit France

secretly, and seek an asylum for his unhappy family in some strange but more hospitable land. Accidental circumstances, however, and the treachery of perfidious servants, prevented the completion of their projects. The king and queen were stopped at Varennes and taken back prisoners to the Tuileries, after which they were incessantly guarded by their enemies. Marie Antoinette was not even free in her own chamber, the door of which she was not suffered to close, in order that all her movements within might be observed.

In this extremity, the queen, penetrated with the idea that a new species of government was requisite for a people so suddenly changed, and convinced that the royalists were more injurious than beneficial to their cause, judged that the only hope of salvation for her family was in the hands of the faction into whose hands the power had passed. In the mean time Mirabeau had addressed himself to the king's brother, who rejected his offer; he then applied directly to the king, who gave him a vague reply, but at length, at the queen's instigation, decided on meeting him at midnight at Saint Cloud, where Louis XVI. had permission to reside for a short period at the close of the year 1790.

Mirabeau, fearing a well-merited vengeance, hesitated at first to proceed to this rendezvous, which he had himself solicited; he, however, finally determined upon going,

and, in order to cover the interview with an impenetrable veil, was accompanied only by his nephew Saillant, whom he left in his cabriolet at one of the exterior gates, after regulating their watches, giving him a letter for the commandant of the Parisian national guard, and addressing him thus: "I am ignorant whether they intend to deal fairly by me or to assassinate me; if, therefore, I do not return in one hour, leave instantly with all speed, deliver this letter as addressed, cause the tocsin to be sounded, and announce the perfidy of the court to the people." The hour passed, and Saillant grew very uneasy about his uncle; he, however, waited a quarter of an hour longer, and then turned his horse's head slowly towards Paris, each moment stopping, looking, and listening: at length he heard himself called; it was by Mirabeau, who exclaimed, "I tremble from the fear that you had left! . . . I am content; all will go well. Preserve the most profound silence upon this step, which is most important to the salvation of the state." Had Saillant strictly obeyed his uncle, the popular rage would doubtless have caused the assassination of all the royal family that night. In this important interview the powerful Mirabeau agreed to take part in the monarchy, but unfortunately he died before he had fulfilled his engagement, and his premature death has given rise to a suspicion that he came by it unfairly.

After the death of Mirabeau, general Dumouriez was desirous of taking the helm of affairs, and even threw himself on his knees before the queen, entreating her to be guided by him, but she had not sufficient confidence in him.

In 1792 another violent insurrection broke out, in which the gates of the Tuileries were forced by a crowd of insulting murderers; some faithful servants placed the royal family behind a rampart of tables and benches, in front of which were ranged a few grenadiers of the battalion of the Filles Saint Thomas, who turned aside the weapons of the assassins. They, however, went sufficiently near to the king's person to place a red cap with a tri-coloured cockade* on his head, and, as each moved past, the unhappy queen was obliged to hear gross and vulgar songs, and to endure the sight of indecent emblems which they held before her eyes. The unfortunate monarch and his family remained close prisoners in the Tuileries until the 10th of April in the same year; when, after the victory of the Marseillais, they were led over the bleeding corpses of their last faithful servants,

* During the revolutionary changes a *white* cockade was assumed by the partisans of the count d'Artois; *red* was added by those of the duke of Orleans; and when Louis XVI. was compelled to adopt those colours he affixed *blue* in honour of royalty; which combination was the origin of the tri-coloured cockade.—ALLONVILLE.

and quitted their ransacked palace never more to re-enter it.

Conducted to the Legislative Assembly to be interrogated and hear their sentence pronounced, the royal family were present three successive days at these painful debates, never leaving the logographers' box, in which they were confined, before night. Transferred from thence to the tower of the Temple, the last residence of Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette was once more tormented in her captivity by constant spies. Clery, their one faithful domestic, was often indisposed, and at those periods the queen and Madame Elizabeth were obliged to make the beds for the family, perform the domestic duties, and on more than one occasion repair the only coat the king possessed, while he slept.

Almost deprived of air in their obscure prison, they sometimes descended into a closely-walled garden, but in doing so were obliged to pass through the midst of a double hedge of guards, who purposely made indelicate remarks and blew tobacco-smoke in the faces of the princesses. At length, to debar the queen from this melancholy walk, they presented her with the head of Madame de Lamballe fixed on the end of a pike.

Confined to the sepulchral calm of their prison, the king and queen, still dignified in their chains, lightened their captivity by instructing their children and prepar-

ing their own minds for the approaching change which they felt convinced was inevitable. The details of the captive existence of these royal prisoners are equally afflicting and edifying, and afford that most useful of all instruction, the knowledge of how to die. It has been remarked by a contemporary, who had several opportunities of judging, that “Louis XVI. sur la trône fut un bon roi ; mais Louis XVI. captif fut sublime.”

While united, the unhappy family endured their sufferings more calmly by sharing them ; but this consolation was not long allowed them, for the king was transferred to another chamber, and never again suffered to see the beloved partakers of his sorrows except to bid them an eternal adieu. The only communication they had was by writing in the night, and affixing the letters to a pin-cushion, which was lowered from the upper story window by a piece of thread ; but this last resource was prohibited, and the commune ordered that they should be deprived of all means of communication or self-destruction, so that Madame Elizabeth, when repairing their clothes, was obliged to cut the thread with her teeth.

The 21st of January, 1793, put a term to the misfortunes of Louis XVI., who obtained permission to see his wife and children, when he tenderly and affectionately bade them farewell. His place of execution was the Place Louis XV., between the Tuileries and the Champs

Elysées, which was chosen in remembrance of the misfortune which occurred there on the day of his marriage. He took off his coat himself, and his hands were immediately seized by the executioner : not prepared for that act of violence, he endeavoured to repulse him, but his good friend and confessor the Abbé Edgeworth prevented him with this remark : “ Sire, this indignity is one more trait of resemblance between your majesty and the Saviour, who will recompense your patience and long sufferings.” Louis immediately offered his hands to be bound, and mounted the scaffold with a firm step ; at the same moment the Abbé Edgeworth made this consoling exclamation : “ *Fils de Saint Louis, montez au ciel.*” The king turned towards the people, and cried with a loud voice, “ Français, je meurs innocent de tous les crimes qu’on m’a imputés. Je pardonne à mes ennemis, et je prie Dieu qu’il leur pardonne. Je souhaite que ma mort . . .” He could say no more, for the ferocious Santerre ordered the drums to strike up for the purpose of drowning his voice, and the savage acclamations that followed informed the queen of the consummation of the regicide.

After the execution of the king, Marie Antoinette was separated from her family, and could not even obtain permission to visit her son when ill. The young prince was confided to the care of mercenary persons, who

treated him great brutality ; and the queen, who declared that nothing but death should separate her from her son, was violently torn from him and conducted her to the Conciergerie, where she awaited her judgment in a damp dungeon, and was guarded incessantly night and day by two gendarmes, from whom she was separated by a screen only.

In October, 1793, she was brought to trial, and during the debates, which lasted seventy-three hours, preserved all her dignity and coolness : her replies were simple, noble, and precise ; but the victim was designed for the guillotine, and could not therefore be saved by either justice, compassion, or the courageous pleading of her defenders, Chaveau-Lagarde and Tronson de Coudray, who faithfully fulfilled their perilous office. Condemned to death on the 16th of October, 1793, by a unanimous vote, Marie Antoinette calmly listened to her doom, and preluded the execution of it by cutting off her hair. Dressed in white, with her hands bound, she was placed on the fatal cart in company with a priest and the executioner, and while proceeding to the place Louis XV., was subjected to the insults of the populace.

“This, madame,” said the priest, “is the moment in which you must arm yourself with courage.”

“Courage !” she replied : “I have been so long apprenticed to it, that there is little probability of its

failing me at this moment." After casting her eyes mournfully towards the royal palace of the Tuileries, she mounted the scaffold with precipitation, and, kneeling down, said, "Lord, enlighten and soften the hearts of my executioners. Adieu for ever, my children; I go to rejoin your father." She then looked down proudly and calmly on the people who surrounded her, and the next moment her life and many sorrows were ended at the age of thirty-eight.

Her body, which was thrown into the same pit that contained her husband's, in the cemetery of the Madeleine, was covered with quick-lime, in order that her remains might be speedily consumed, but some of her bones, which were discovered in 1815, were transferred to the royal tomb of Saint Denis.

Marie Antoinette had four children—Maria Thérèse Charlotte, born in 1778, now duchess d'Angoulême; the Dauphin Louis, who was born in 1781 and died in 1789; Charles Louis, duke of Normandy, born in 1785, and who, after the death of his father, was known, during his short existence, as Louis XVII.; and a daughter who died in her infancy.

QUEEN AND EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

(Reign of Napoleon Bonaparte.)

MARIE ROSE JOSEPHINE TASCHER DE LA PAGERIE, daughter of a highly respectable family of Martinique, was born at Saint Pierre, in that Island, in the year 1768, where she resided with her mother on the estate of her aunt, Madame Renaudin, who entertained great affection for her, and devoted much attention to her education. At an early age she was united to the Viscount Alexandre de Beauharnais, then a major in the French army, and son of the governor-general of the Carribean Islands, whose property adjoined that of Monsieur de Renaudin. The young officer had formed a previous attachment, but was obliged to yield to the wishes of his family, and, although Josephine loved him sincerely, he gave her serious occasion for jealousy, which she at first complained of with gentleness, but, finding that, instead of changing his conduct, he publicly admitted his passion for the woman who was destroying her happiness, Madame de Beauharnais reproached him with bitterness, which served only to increase the distance between them.

On arriving at Paris, Josephine was presented at court, where her grace and amiability rendered her an object

of interest and affection to many, but the estrangement that existed between herself and the viscount, added to the declining health of her mother, decided her to sacrifice the triumphs of self-love to filial affection, and accordingly in 1787 she returned to Martinique, and remained in that colony until the year 1791, when the insurrections that broke out there obliged her to return to the metropolis of France, which was not more peaceful.

The rank of general commanding in chief, which her husband had obtained, as well as that of a president of the *Assemblée Constituante*, gave Madame de Beauharnais considerable importance and influence, which she exerted towards assisting many unfortunate persons, and saving many from the scaffold.

During the revolution, General Beauharnais embraced the new ideas which were disseminated, with all the enthusiasm of an exalted imagination. He thought that liberty would be gained by obtaining some concessions from the king, whom he loved and venerated. Madame de Beauharnais' self-love was much flattered by the distinction her husband had attained; and the affection he manifested for his two children, Eugene and Hortense, almost revived her tenderness for him.

In 1793 the revolutionary excesses spared neither age, virtue, nor merit; and General Beauharnais, who had valiantly defended his country, was calumniated, arrested,

and thrown into prison. When in this critical position, his wife, generously forgetting all his injustice towards her, paid him the most affectionate attentions, and made unceasing and heroic efforts to save him, by which she rendered herself an object of suspicion. The general was moved with a sense of gratitude and admiration at this noble conduct, and wrote her several most affecting letters, in which he strongly recommended his children to her care. He deeply regretted his neglect of her, and made every effort to show how sensible he was of her many admirable qualities; he also lamented the absence of his brother, who might have served as a guide to the wife he had so often offended; and he proved with sincerity that his last thoughts and affections were with her. Monsieur Francis de Beauharnais was in all respects worthy of the love of his brother, and, although they differed in political opinions, nothing could alter their attachment. Each pursued an opposite path with equal frankness, loyalty, and honour. The viscount Francis de Beauharnais, brother-in-law of Josephine, was always devoted to her interest, and she preserved a regard for him which continued until her death.

In her turn, Madame de Beauharnais was put in the prison of the Madelonnettes, where she received the last letter of adieu from her husband, and heard the melancholy news of his death. This information, though ex-

pected, produced a terrible effect on her ; she remained insensible for some time, and, on recovering, abandoned herself to the most violent transports of despair, which caused the delay of her own sentence.

In recounting the circumstances connected with her imprisonment to some of the devoted friends who afterwards composed her court at Navarre, she frequently remarked that, notwithstanding all appearances and probabilities, she never suffered herself for a moment to entertain the idea that her execution would really take place, because she incessantly thought of a prediction which had been made to her by an old negress in Martinique previous to her marriage.

One day, when strolling through the fruit-walk of a coffee-plantation near Saint Pierre, she perceived several slaves assembled round an old woman who was renowned for telling fortunes. Mademoiselle Tascher stopped to listen, when, on perceiving her, the sorceress uttered a loud cry, took her hand, which she looked at attentively, and appeared to suffer from extreme agitation. Amused with her grimaces, she asked her if she observed anything in her face or hand which was extraordinary. The old negress replied that she did.

“Is it misfortune or happiness that awaits me?”

“Misfortune ! . . . oh, yes, and happiness also.”

“You do not compromise yourself, my dear sibyl; your oracles are not distinct.”

“I dare not render them more intelligible,” said the woman, raising her eyes towards the sky with a singular expression. Josephine’s curiosity was excited, and she requested her to explain what she foresaw in her future destiny.

“What I foresee? You will not believe me if I speak.”

“Oh, I assure you I am most credulous; therefore, good mother, tell what I have to fear, and what to hope?”

“You insist on it,—then listen. You will be married very soon, but your union will not be happy; you will become a widow, and then then you will be *Queen of France*; you will pass some glorious and happy years, but you will perish in an insurrection.” On pronouncing these words the woman burst through the circle that had gathered round her, and hastened away as fast as her enfeebled legs would permit. Mademoiselle Tascher forbade the negroes to ridicule the prediction of the old negress, but she nevertheless endeavoured to persuade them that it was highly absurd, and that she had no faith in it; and, after laughing over the adventure with her family, lost all recollection of it until the death of her husband, when she confessed that, by constantly

thinking of it, all that had been predicted to her appeared far less absurd, and even possible.

A few mornings after the general's execution, the jailor entered the room which was occupied by Madame de Beauharnais, the duchess d'Aiguillon, and two other ladies, and informed the former that he was come to take the folding bedstead which she occupied, to give it to another prisoner. "To give it to another prisoner!" exclaimed Madame d'Aiguillon; "then I suppose Madame Beauharnais will have a better?"

"No, no," replied the man with an atrocious smile, "she will not require it; they are coming to fetch her from this to the Conciergerie, and from thence to the guillotine." At these words her companions uttered violent lamentations; Madame de Beauharnais endeavoured to console them, but, finding them inconsolable, told them that their grief was unreasonable, for that she should not only escape the guillotine, but should be *Queen of France*.

"Why do you not then at once appoint your court?" said Madame d'Aiguillon, almost angrily.

"Ah, truly, I did not think of it; but I will make you my *dame d'honneur*, I promise you." Perceiving so much *sang froid* in Madame de Beauharnais, the duchess and the two other ladies' tears fell still more abundantly, for they thought that she, like many other

victims, had lost her reason. She assured them that she was perfectly conscious of the improbability of what she had said, and that she was not assuming a false courage, but that she felt persuaded of the realization of the oracle. Madame d'Aiguillon became suddenly faint, upon which Madame de Beauharnais drew her towards the window, which she opened that the air might revive her: while standing there they perceived a woman making signs to them which they did not understand. She constantly held the skirt of her dress and pointed towards it, till at length Madame de Beauharnais pronounced the word *robe*, upon which she signified that she was understood; she then picked up a stone and held it up in her hand, when the prisoner cried *pierre*. On being sure that her meaning was perceived, her joy was extreme, and, holding the stone and a portion of her dress in the same hand, she gave them to understand by her gestures that *Robespierre's* head was cut off. This singular pantomime caused the captives great emotion, as they had every reason to believe that the tyrant Robespierre *was* dead. While in a state of anxiety between hope and fear, they were startled by a noise in the corridor, and a few moments after heard the voice of the formidable jailor, and beheld their companions in misfortune, who gave them the details of the event.

When empress, Josephine was desirous of keeping her

word, and expressed a wish to have the duchess d'Aiguillon (then the countess Louis de Girardin) as her *dame d'honneur*; but the emperor refused, because she had been *divorced*. Some time after his severe notions abated, and Madame Girardin was appointed *dame d'honneur* to the queen of Naples, while that country was governed by Joseph Bonaparte.

Upon the death of Robespierre, Tallien restored Madame de Beauharnais to liberty, which service she never forgot; and after Napoleon Bonaparte became first consul he gave a handsome pension to the intrepid citizen who delivered France from that odious tyrant. Josephine also undertook the charge of Mademoiselle Thermidor Tallien's education, and honoured her mother with her friendship.

Barras, the director of the executive Assembly, obtained the restoration of a great part of General Beauharnais's fortune to his widow, and, by way of indemnity for that which had been disposed of, gave four hundred thousand francs for Malmaison, which he presented to her. After her accession to the throne, Josephine spent enormous sums in embellishing this residence, to which she was much attached.

After General Bonaparte had dispersed the different sections and parties in Paris, and seized their arms, Eugene de Beauharnais, who was then only fifteen years of

age, presented himself to him, and boldly requested permission to wear his father's sword. Bonaparte admired his energy, which he publicly commended, and this circumstance strengthened the desire he had to see the widow of the celebrated General Beauharnais, who was living in retreat at Malmaison, assisting in the education of her children, and devoting much of her time to the study of botany, of which she was passionately fond.

He saw and became attached to her, but Madame de Beauharnais hesitated some time before she consented to marry him. Her first marriage having been unfortunate, she feared to enter upon a second; she also dreaded his ambitious character; but the young conqueror was assiduous in his attentions, and promised to bestow paternal affection upon her two children, so that she at length yielded to the solicitations of her family and friends, especially the director Barras, and probably also the dictates of her own heart, and in 1796 became the wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, who frequently declared that she was the only woman he ever truly loved.

Josephine was by no means beautiful, but her manners and deportment were particularly graceful; there was a peculiar charm in her smile, and sweetness in her tones; she also dressed with an infinite degree of taste. When her husband was named general-in-chief of the army in

Italy, and the young hero hastened to achieve the brilliant exploits which laid the foundation of his military reputation, Madame Bonaparte accompanied him, and was as much admired for her gentleness and goodness beyond the Alps as she had been in France.

At the commencement of her marriage, Josephine's sentiments of affection for Napoleon were not so strong as they were a little later. His letters to her prove how greatly he was enamoured of her, and how much he regretted that she did not manifest a more tender passion for him. His jealousy, which he carried to an extreme degree, manifested itself, on all occasions, and was not relative to one man, but extended to all who visited Madame Bonaparte. In order to insure domestic peace, she was obliged to close her doors against her old friends, whose society gave umbrage to her husband. She supported unjust suspicions and violent reproaches with a degree of patience and gentleness which entitled her to the most sincere and durable attachment of the man who, for a long time, refused to listen to his family and ministers, when uniting to persuade him to renounce her and contract an alliance with a sovereign princess.

When the conqueror of Italy carried his arms into Egypt, Josephine retired to Malmaison, where she continued her researches in her favourite study of botany, and built a very extensive hothouse, which she filled with

a most rare and valuable collection of exotics. Her taste in this respect was so well known throughout Europe, that, although England and France were constantly at war, the prince regent of England gave orders that the envoys whom she employed to collect her horticultural treasures should be respected and pass securely.

When Bonaparte was promoted to the consulate, Josephine profited by this new elevation to extend her benevolence; she became the depository of the sorrows of all who approached her, had the names of several unhappy French families erased from the list of emigrants, and acted in so maternal a manner, that Napoleon, in one of his letters to her, wrote, "*Si je gagne les batailles, c'est vous qui gagnez les cœurs.*" This great man acknowledged that the generous and amiable conduct of his wife assisted towards his elevation; and if Napoleon, who frequently listened to her useful advice, had heeded her supplications, the duke d'Enghien might have continued his innocent career in exile, and himself have been spared the commission of a cruel murder, which tarnished his glory and plunged France in grief. But though Josephine deeply regretted that she had not succeeded in preventing that deplorable catastrophe, she also vindicated her husband. "The emperor was cruelly advised," she said: "such a project would never have en-

tered his mind ; but when the duke was once arrested, nothing could prevent his execution, from a fear the emperor entertained that he would be taxed with weakness ; but I am sure he has more than once lamented having been too promptly obeyed. There are some things," she continued, "upon which I should be silent, that I might not expose the names of the true authors of the death of the duke d'Enghien to infamy ; but history will speak, and the truth will be known. It was for the most part *General Moreau* who was the cause of this bloody transaction. I shall always detest those who urged him to the crime : *they have been his worst enemies.*"

On his return from Marengo, Napoleon gave the following prophetic felicitation to his happy wife : "Votre fils marche rapidement à la postérité . . . il deviendra l'un des plus grands capitaines de l'Europe." A prediction which succeeding events fully justified.

Josephine was consecrated empress of France by Pope Pius VII. (Chiaramonte), and Napoleon placed the iron crown upon her brow at Milan. A short time previously to the coronation, Cardinal Fesch pronounced the nuptial benediction upon the royal pair at night, in the chapel of the Tuileries, by direction of the sovereign pontiff, in the presence of a small number of witnesses, amongst whom was Eugene de Beauharnais. Hitherto they had

only been united according to the civil form of marriage, political circumstances having prevented the celebration of the religious ceremony.

When seated on the throne, and wearing the double diadem, surrounded by the love and glory of her illustrious husband, and cherished with affection by the French people, Josephine did not imagine that she would so soon have been required to yield her place to a stranger. Her son, Prince Eugene, Viceroy of Italy, was married to a daughter of the king of Bavaria, upon which occasion magnificent fêtes were given at Munich, at which the emperor and empress were present ; and her daughter Hortense was united to Louis Bonaparte, king of Holland, by whom she had a son, who, unfortunately for Josephine, died in 1807 ; for Napoleon was excessively fond of his young nephew, whom it was said he intended to have named as his successor ; and after the death of this prince, the report of the emperor's divorce began to be circulated at court.

In the apartment which the empress usually occupied at the Tuileries there was a door which communicated with the emperor's cabinet by a secret staircase, and when he wanted to consult Josephine he was in the habit of knocking at it himself, upon which signal she descended. After the divorce became a subject of consultation, each summons at that door caused her such violent agitation

that she could with difficulty respire, and on more than one occasion she fainted from the fear of hearing the confirmation of the separation she so much dreaded. At length the Senate confirmed the dissolution of the marriage, in 1809.

When the empress knew that her fate was decided, she shed such an abundance of tears that for many months her sight was too much affected to enable her to endure any light. Nevertheless, her determination was taken, and she proved herself superior to her elevated station, by sacrificing her crown for the benefit of her country. Napoleon ardently desired an heir, through whom he might insure repose to France, and the throne to his dynasty: Josephine had never had any children by her second marriage; she therefore consented to the divorce, and in 1810 descended from one of the most brilliant thrones in the world. She also consoled and encouraged her children, who were deeply afflicted at the circumstance, and, but for her remonstrances, would have quitted France for ever. She reminded them that the emperor had been their father and benefactor, that they owed him unbounded obedience, and that they would add to her sorrows if they manifested any discontent to their sovereign; in fact, she used such forcible arguments that they not only consented to remain in the country, but also to be present at the marriage of the emperor and Marie Louise.

Josephine, to whom the Senate by unanimous vote granted the privilege of preserving the title of empress, retired at first to her domain of Navarre, which was formerly the property of the princess of Bouillon, and previous to the revolution a most enchanting spot ; but she was obliged to expend large sums in repairs, especially in the restoration of the fountains, which, having been neglected, caused much unhealthiness in the neighbourhood. In this beautiful retreat she held her court, which was composed of devoted friends whom the emperor had permitted her to choose. Her *dame d'honneur* was the amiable Madame d'Arberg, who had held the situation of *dame du palais* when Josephine was reigning empress ; Madame de la Rochefoucauld being at that time *dame d'honneur* : but that lady having requested the emperor to grant her the same situation with Marie Louise as she held with Josephine, Napoleon was so indignant at her ingratitude to the mistress who had loaded her with favours and honoured her with her friendship, that he not only refused her the place in the court of the new empress, but also desired Josephine to dismiss her, and appoint Madame d'Arberg ; being well acquainted with that lady's great attachment to his discarded wife.

Surrounded by a circle of affectionate friends, who preferred following her in her retreat to remaining at the brilliant court of Marie Louise, Josephine occupied

herself with doing good and benevolent actions. After her divorce she renounced several projects which she had nourished for a long space of time, to avoid anything which appeared like inconsiderate expense, and from that motive deprived herself of the palace she had intended building at Navarre, the existing one being too small. The emperor was very desirous that she should have it, and offered to pay one half of the expense, but Monsieur Berthaut's estimate of the charge amounted to three millions of francs, and she would hear no more of it, but contented herself with a very indifferent residence.

During her stay at Navarre the emperor corresponded with her regularly every week ; some of his letters which are published contain passages full of sincere affection, proving with how much regret he must have consented to part from her. Josephine's favourite residence was Malmaison, where she spent the greater part of the year. In this cherished spot Napoleon frequently visited her and consulted her on political affairs. His anxiety for her health and comfort was incessant, and he constantly gave indications of his esteem by surrounding her with a thousand little attentions.

At Malmaison, as at Navarre, Josephine was an object of love and veneration to all classes, for her benevolence was universal. She was passionately fond of flowers, and had hot-houses which produced many rare and

beautiful specimens ; but she dispensed with other gratifications to enable her to indulge that one ; and, that she might not diminish the sums which she set aside for the relief of the poor, or for the purchase of presents which she destined for those she loved, she suppressed her menagerie, and, with the exception of some favourite kangaroos, and paroquets, all the animals were given away. Her mornings were spent in visiting the poor and discovering what they were in need of, or in reading and entertaining musical friends ; in the evening she was always brilliantly attired, and received the foreign princes, ambassadors, and nobility.

Napoleon invariably spoke her praises with enthusiasm, even at the Tuileries, and in presence of Marie Louise, who conceived such an extreme jealousy and aversion for Josephine and all that recalled her to her mind, that in going to Saint Germain she deviated from the usual road in order to avoid passing Malmaison.

Josephine's joy at the birth of the king of Rome was most unaffected ; she was at Navarre when it occurred, on the 20th of March, 1811, and gave a magnificent fête to celebrate the occasion. Her son Eugene brought her the news from Paris, he having been present at the birth, with the other princes and princesses. On offering his felicitations to the emperor, Napoleon said, " You are going to visit your mother, Eugene ; tell her that I

am sure she will rejoice at the news of my happiness more than any other person. I should have written her ere this, had I not been absorbed with the pleasure of looking at my son ; I only tear myself from him to attend to the most indispensable duties. To-night I shall acquit myself of the sweetest and most agreeable of all ; I shall write to Josephine." The next evening the empress received a letter from Napoleon informing her of the event. "Cet enfant," he wrote, "de concert avec *notre Eugène*, fera mon bonheur et celui de France." The woman to whom he addressed himself was fully capable of appreciating the charm of the phrase in which he so affectionately coupled the name of her son with that of his own.

Notwithstanding Napoleon entertained so great an esteem for his first wife, his opinion of women in general was unfavourable, and he had several adventures which confirmed him in his judgment of them. He confided all his infidelities to Josephine, who received his confessions with the indulgence of a friend, although on some occasions they caused her vexation. By this conduct she retained the heart of the man she so much cherished, and who frequently remarked "*que rien ne valait Josephine*," although his conduct proved that he sometimes forgot her. But the emperor never encouraged license, or infringed upon the laws of morality by any public

examples of irregularity; and those who were known as his favourites compromised themselves by their extravagance and indiscretion. The two who were most conspicuous as such were Mademoiselle Grassini and Madame Gazani. The former was a singer at the theatre of Milan, and charmed him with the beauty of her voice and the elegance of her form; she was conducted to Paris by the prince of Neuchâtel, and Napoleon made her rich presents; but, finding that she was attached to Rode, the celebrated violinist, he sent her back to Italy. Having been stopped near Naples by a party of brigands, she first endeavoured to work upon their compassion to induce them to spare her valuables; but, seeing that all her entreaties were useless, and that they were determined upon having the jewels that were on her person, she begged them to take all she possessed but the portrait of Napoleon, and in fact assisted the robbers in despoiling the cherished image of the diamonds which surrounded it. It is said that Mademoiselle Grassini afterwards married Rode, with whom she went to Russia.

The other favourite was Madame Gazani, the daughter of an actress attached to the theatre of Genoa, the place of her birth. In one of his journeys to Italy, Napoleon was dazzled with the extreme beauty of her countenance and her charming figure, and promised her an appoint-

ment for herself and her husband if they would go to Paris. She accepted his offer, and was immediately made reader to the Empress Josephine in 1809. Her husband was also appointed to the situation of receiver-general at Evreux.

Madame Gazani was tall and very graceful, although thin; her complexion was dark, but her features were faultless; her black eyes were beautifully brilliant, expressing with promptitude all she said and all she heard. She was not a proficient in music, but sung agreeably and possessed an enchanting voice.

After her arrival in Paris, the favourite desired to be on an equality with the *dame du palais* and the other ladies holding situations at court, and Madame de la Rochefoucauld endeavoured to oppose her in many things, till at length Madame Gazani complained to the emperor, who desired that she should not be interfered with.

Her influence did not, however, last long, for, two months after her instalment at the palace, Napoleon, dreading the power which her attractions might obtain over him, was determined on parting from her, and, entering one day roughly into his wife's apartment, he said, "Chassez Madame Gazani; il faut qu'elle retourne en Italie." But Josephine, who foresaw her own divorce, sympathized with the favourite, whose similar position to her own excited her interest, and she replied, "No,

Sire, I will keep her with me; it would be cruel to abandon a young woman to despair, after having torn her from all her duties: I shall, perhaps, ere long be as unhappy as she is; we shall weep together. Suffer her, therefore, to remain with me." The emperor yielded to her request, but upon condition that he should see her no more.

From that moment, Josephine, forgetting all the motives she had formerly had for aversion to her, loaded her with kindness; and when Madame Gazani accompanied her to Navarre after her divorce, she remarked to her friend, Madame d'Arberg, that, in the sad moment of so cruel a separation, it was a gratification to have a companion to whom she could speak of the emperor with the same melancholy pleasure as she would listen, and who entertained the same sentiments for him as she did herself.

After the death of Josephine, in 1814, Madame Gazani retired to her château of Condé, where she lived peaceably and respectably until 1826, when she was attacked with brain fever, on recovering from which she imprudently bathed in the Iton, which caused her death.

The empress Josephine, in her honourable retirement, at the age of forty-six, was surrounded with the esteem of all Europe; and, possessing a fortune of two million francs a year, she had ample means of satisfying her

benevolent inclinations. Besides numerous pensioners to whom she gave considerable alms, she founded a school for poor orphans, in which they were taught reading, writing, accounts, needlework, and the manufacture of lace. She loved the fine arts, and encouraged those artists whose prosperity had been obscured by the troubles of the revolution or other misfortunes.

She not only purchased their works, but bestowed on them all the favour and interest that is due to merit. Animated by her, Gros, Girodet, and Guérin cultivated with success the pursuit of art; Spontini, Méhul, Paër, and Boieldieu obtained eminence as musicians; and Fontanes, Arnault, Andrieu, and Lemercier produced admirable additions to modern literature.

On several occasions, such as her birthday, or the day of her fête, the public exhibited testimonials of affection and rejoicing, but Josephine always endeavoured to repress them lest they should cause displeasure to the empress Marie Louise. She was very desirous of seeing the young king of Rome, and frequently regretted that she should never have that gratification, feeling certain that his mother would not consent to it; but Napoleon conducted her to Bagatelle, where the young prince was, feeling assured that she loved him as much as if he were her own son.

He often retired to an apartment, which she reserved

for him at Malmaison, where he wrote and transacted state business; and the empress, having preserved an attachment for him which bordered upon worship, never made use of the room in his absence, or suffered any of the furniture to be moved, but kept everything exactly in the same state as the emperor had left it. The volume of history rested on the desk with the mark in the page where he had stopped reading; the pen with which he had dictated laws to Europe retained the ink; and on the table lay the map of the world, upon which he had confidentially pointed out to her his future projects and the countries he intended to conquer, and which in some places bore marks which appeared to have been made by a movement of impatience, occasioned, perhaps, by some slight observation. Josephine alone removed the dust which adhered to these objects, which she considered *relics*, and none but herself might enter the sanctuary.

Confiding in her sagacity, the emperor communicated to her his intention to undertake the fatal expedition to Russia in 1812. Fearing the result of this gigantic enterprise, Josephine in vain entreated him to abandon that project; but his determination was made, and her gloomy presentiments were realized; from which time her anxiety for the emperor and his prosperity kept her

in a continual state of agitation, which injured her health.

In 1814 the entrance of the foreign armies into Paris was her death-stroke ; she not only had to deplore the fall of the great man to whom she had been united, but also beheld her daughter deprived of her diadem, and her son's glorious sword become useless in his hand.

Previously to the entrance of the foreign troops, on hearing that the Empress Marie Louise had retired to Blois, Josephine hastily left Malmaison and retired to Navarre, in a state of melancholy and despair which her attendants vainly endeavoured to tranquillize. When arrived there, the ladies of her household remarked that she sought solitude, and spent the greater portion of her time in reading and re-reading the letters she had at different times received from the emperor, one of which she carried for many days in her bosom.*

Her situation was most distressing, for in the calm of the château of Navarre she was ignorant of what she had

* It was the last letter that the Emperor wrote from Brienne, in which he says, amongst other things, " *En revoyant ces lieux, où j'ai passé ma première enfance, et comparant l'état paisible où j'étais alors à l'agitation et aux terreurs que j'éprouve aujourd'hui, je me suis dit bien des fois, J'ai cherché dans plusieurs combats à rencontrer la mort ; je ne puis plus la redouter ; elle serait aujourd'hui un bienfait pour moi ; . . . mais je voudrais revoir une seule fois Joséphine !*"

to fear, or what to hope. Those who followed her from Malmaison could not, however, conceal from her the fact that the capital had yielded, that the allied sovereigns had entered, and that Napoleon had retired to Fontainebleau.*

*The following is a letter which Napoleon wrote to her from that town:—

“*A l'Impératrice Joséphine, à Malmaison.*

“CHERE JOSEPHINE,

“*Fontainebleau, 16 Avril, 1814.*

“Je vous ai écrit le 8 de ce mois (c'était un Vendredi), et peut-être n'avez-vous pas reçu ma lettre: on se battait encore; il est possible qu'on l'ait interceptée; maintenant les communications doivent être rétablie. J'ai pris mon parti: je ne doute pas que ce billet ne vous parvienne. Je ne vous répéterai pas ce que je vous disais. Je me plaignais alors de ma situation: aujourd'hui je m'en félicite, j'ai la tête et l'esprit débarassés d'un poids énorme; ma chute est grande, mais au moins elle est utile, à ce qu'ils disent—Je vois dans ma retraite substituer la plume à l'épée. L'histoire de mon règne sera curieuse; on ne m'a vu que de profil, je me montrerai tout entier. Que de choses n'ai-je pas à faire connaître! Que d'hommes dont on a une fausse opinion! . . . J'ai comblé de bienfaits des milliers de misérables! qu'ont-ils fait dernièrement de moi! . . . —Ils m'ont tous trahi, oui, tous; j'excepte de ce nombre ce bon Eugène, si digne de vous et de moi. Puisse-t-il être heureux sous un roi fait pour apprécier les sentimens de la nature et de l'honneur!—Adieu, ma chère Joséphine! résignez-vous ainsi que moi, et ne perdez jamais le souvenir de celui qui ne vous a jamais oubliée, et ne vous oubliera jamais. Adieu, Joséphine!

“NAPOLÉON.

“P. S. J'attends de vos nouvelles à l'île d'Elbe: je ne me porte pas bien.”

On learning that terrible catastrophe which decided the fate of the emperor, Josephine became insensible, and was for some hours attacked with fainting fits. A sad silence reigned throughout the château, and her attendants were overcome with melancholy consternation. At length, recovering her strength and energy, she exclaimed, "I ought not to remain here, my presence is necessary to the emperor; I shall fulfil the duty of Marie Louise! Since she has abandoned him, I will remain with him. I only agreed to separate from him while he was happy; *now* I am sure he expects me." After which tears came to console her heart, which was breaking with the weight and sadness of her thoughts. She then said to Monsieur Beaumont, "You will however remain here with me until the allied sovereigns inform me of their intentions towards me; I am certain they will render all due homage to the first wife of Napoleon." During her short stay at Navarre she was constantly engaged in writing or conversing on the political position of France, and the words, "Ah! s'il m'avait écouté!" often escaped her lips with a sigh.

Some days after her arrival at Navarre she received a letter from the allied sovereigns, who expressed a wish to visit her at Malmaison. This mark of consideration deeply affected her, but at first she hesitated to accept the invitation, thinking that Napoleon's first wife should

henceforward be invisible to all eyes. But powerful considerations (for the welfare of her children) induced her once more to return and do the honours of Malmaison.

On returning to her beloved residence, she found that a guard of honour had been placed there ; her property had been respected, and she felt herself in the midst of a new court embellished by the first persons in Europe. The duke of Berri, fearing that the recent events must have caused her great anxiety and alarm, sent the count de Mesnard to assure her that he should be too happy to do anything that would be agreeable to her, for whom he entertained as much respect as admiration.

The Emperor Alexander testified the greatest friendship for her and her children, and frequently dined with them at Malmaison ; moreover, her son Eugene was most cordially received by the king, Louis XVIII., who embraced him, and declared that as soon as peace was announced he would make him a marshal of France, for that he considered him a brilliant example to the army ; and that he ought to be surnamed the *Bayard du siècle*. He also received Queen Hortense with great distinction, and she retained the honours of her rank.

A short time after her return to Malmaison, Josephine, whose health had been indifferent since the emperor's exile, felt very unwell on returning from a grand dinner which Queen Hortense had given to the allied sovereigns

at Saint-Leu-Tavernay. Her medical attendant, Monsieur Moreau, administered some medicine which composed her, but it was evident to all her friends that she suffered much. Lord Beverley and his sons breakfasted with her on the following morning, when she remarked that since Napoleon's fall the English alone had had the generosity to speak of him with respect and admiration ; and justly criticised those who, far from sympathizing with him in his unexampled misfortune, presumed not only to blame the errors which they had formerly justified, but even invented others of which he was not capable ; she also expressed her astonishment that Marie Louise should have been restrained by secondary considerations from joining the husband whom she professed to love tenderly.

“ Although I am no longer his wife,” she added, “ I would join him to-morrow, if I did not fear to create some disagreement between himself and the companion he has preferred to me. It is above all in this moment of his abandonment that it would be more agreeable to me to be near him, to assist him in supporting his weariness at the island of Elba, and to share his griefs.”*

* The following is a letter which she addressed to Napoleon at the Island of Elba :

“ SIRE,

“ *Malmaison 6 Mai, 1814.*

“ C'est seulement aujourd'hui que je puis calculer tout l'étendue du

Those who were acquainted with Josephine knew the sincerity of her expressions. Her own sex, above all, will understand the redoubled affection with which she was inspired by Napoleon's position. A great misfortune has often served to reanimate a love which has

malheur d'avoir vu mon union avec vous cassée par la loi ; et que je gémissais de n'être pour vous qu'une amie, qui ne peut que gémir sur un malheur aussi grand qu'il est inattendu. Ce n'est pas de la perte du trône que je vous plains : je sais par moi-même que l'on peut s'en consoler ; mais je me déssole du chagrin que vous aurez éprouvé en vous séparant de vos vieux compagnons de gloire. Vous aurez regretté non seulement vos officiers, mais les soldats dont vous vous rappeliez les figures, les noms, les brillants faits d'armes ; que vous ne pouviez tous récompenser, disiez-vous, parce qu'ils étaient trop nombreux. Laisser de pareils héros privés de leur chef, qui partagea si souvent leurs fatigues, aura été pour votre cœur une douleur insupportable ; c'est celle-là surtout que je partage. Vous aurez eu encore à pleurer sur l'ingratitude et l'abandon d'amis, sur lesquels vous croyez pouvoir compter. Ah ! Sire, que ne puis-je voler près de vous pour vous donner l'assurance que l'exil ne peut effrayer que des âmes vulgaires ; et que, loin de diminuer un attachement sincère, le malheur lui prête une nouvelle force ! J'ai été au moment de quitter la France, de suivre vos traces, de vous consacrer le reste d'une existence que vous avez embellie si long-temps. Un seul motif m'a retenue, et vous le devinerez. Si j'apprends que, contre toute apparence, *je suis la seule* qui veuille remplir son devoir, rien ne me retiendra, et j'irai au seul lieu où puisse être désormais pour moi le bonheur, puisque je pourrai vous consoler, lorsque vous y êtes isolé et malheureux ! Dites un mot, et je pars.

Adieu, sire. Tout ce que je pourrais ajouter serait de trop. Ce

almost expired, and to render most women capable of sacrificing all and everything to procure some consolation for the man whose presence under happier circumstances they had avoided, and it is therefore the more astonishing that Marie Louise, who always manifested great affection for the emperor, should have abandoned him in the hour of his misfortune. As wife and mother, her place was at Saint Helena: there she would have been more powerful and more respected than in the pompous court of her father, which was ill suited to the wife of an unhappy and an exiled man. Her most zealous advocates have never attempted to justify her on that point, and doubtless posterity will condemn her, as many of her contemporaries have done; whereas Josephine will be judged as she proved herself to be—the best of wives, and the most eligible of the two women to have shared the throne, the basis of which was strengthened by the love the nation bore her, and maintained (until his fatal separation from her) by the glory of Napoleon's arms.

On the 19th of May, the emperor of Russia and the king of Prussia having gone to dine with Josephine at

n'est plus par des paroles que l'on doit prouver ce que vous inspirez ; et pour des actions, il me faut votre consentement.

“ JOSEPHINE.

P. S. La Malmaison à été respectée ; j'y suis entourée des égards des souverains étrangers, mais je voudrais bien n'y pas rester.”

Malmaison, she determined, in opposition to her physician's advice, to do the honours of her table; she was, however, so exceedingly unwell before the repast was concluded as to be obliged to resign her place to queen Hortense. From that moment her malady assumed a serious appearance. The Emperor Alexander visited her on the following morning, and, observing her to be much altered since the preceding day, proposed to send his own physician to visit her, but she refused, from the fear of disobliging Monsieur Horeau. Her complaint was a species of gangrenous quinsy, which increased so rapidly that on the evening of the same day she had great difficulty in articulating. Every effort was made to stop the progress of this frightful disorder, but in vain! The amiable sufferer bore her pain with exemplary patience, and by her affectionate looks endeavoured to console those who surrounded her. She heard that the celebrated flower painter, Redonté, had arrived at Malmaison, to copy two rare and beautiful plants which were in her hot-house, and signified that she wished to see him. When he approached she gave him her hand, and then gently repulsed him, intimating that she feared her complaint was infectious. "Next week," she said, "I hope to see you at work upon a new chef-d'œuvre."

On the 29th of May she desired to receive the sacrament in company with her children, who were absorbed

with grief at the frightful ravages which the disease was making upon the countenance of their adored mother. The emperor Alexander went almost daily to visit her, upon which occasions she always thanked him for his attentions with looks of gratitude, for the difficulty of speaking increased to a painful degree. On the day of her death he arrived at Malmaison at the moment she had given her last blessing to her children, who, kneeling beside the dying empress, could not address a word to the Russian monarch, but their sobs expressed the depth of their grief.

“At least,” said Josephine, “I die regretted; I have always desired the welfare of France. I have done all in my power to contribute to it; and I can assure all who now surround me in my last moments that the first wife of Napoleon never caused the shedding of a tear.” These were almost her last words; she expired on the 29th of May, 1814.

The remains of the Empress Josephine were placed on a bed of state, surrounded by numerous wax-lights, in a room which was hung with black; a richly decorated altar was raised to the right of the bed, where the mass for the dead was repeated at stated hours; and during the three days that elapsed between her death and interment, more than twenty thousand persons paid their last visit to Josephine.

The funeral took place with great magnificence, at mid-day on the 2d of June, in the modest little church at Ruel, the parish in which Malmaison is situated, and was attended not only by all the high and powerful in the land, but also by an immense population of the middle and lower classes, who assembled to manifest their gratitude and sincere regrets.

The corners of the grave-cloth were held by the grand-duke of Baden, who was married to Josephine's niece, Stephanie de Beauharnais; the Marquis de Beauharnais, her brother-in-law; the count Henry de Tascher, her nephew; and the count de Beauharnais, *chevalier d'honneur* to Marie Louise. General Sacken, aid-de-camp to the emperor of Russia, and the king of Prussia's adjutant-general, headed the procession on foot, followed by a great number of foreign princes, ambassadors, marshals, and senators; different orders of fraternity in the parish carrying banners; and twenty young girls, dressed in white and singing psalms, composed a part of the cortège, the sides of which were formed by troops of Russian hussars and national guards, while two thousand poor of all ages closed the procession. It is calculated that more than four thousand neighbouring inhabitants had assembled near the church to pay their last homage to the woman who so well merited the title of *the mother of the poor and afflicted*.

Monsieur de Barral, the archbishop of Tours, assisted by the bishops of Evreux and Versailles, performed the funeral service, and the corpse was deposited in that part of the cemetery in which the three hundred persons who perished in the Rue Royale at the marriage of Louis XVI. were buried.

General Sacken was charged by his master, the emperor Alexander, to inform Josephine's relatives who had assembled at Malmaison to attend the funeral, that, being profoundly afflicted by the death of the empress, he was desirous of dedicating the thirty-six hours that he had to remain in Paris to the society of the *excellent* prince Eugene and his sister; and he remained with them until he quitted the capital.

The little church of Ruel was covered with black cloth drapery on the occasion of her funeral; no ornament or inscription decorated the walls, but the tears of the proudest sovereigns of Europe mingled with those of the poor of France to pronounce the funeral oration of the good Josephine. Her children afterwards placed her remains in a magnificent tomb of pure white marble. The empress is represented in a kneeling attitude, attired in the imperial costume, and apparently praying for France.

The only words engraved on this beautiful monument are, *Eugène et Hortense à Joséphine.*

EMPRESS, QUEEN, AND REGENT, MARIE LOUISE.

DAUGHTER of Francis II., emperor of Austria, and of Marie Thérèse de Bourbon, princess of Naples and Sicily, and niece of Marie Antoinette, Marie Louise was born at Vienna, in the year 1791; she was a descendant of Henry IV. of France by Philip duke of Orleans, second son of Louis III., and by Elizabeth of Orleans, who was married to Leopold duke of Lorraine. Marie Louise was exceedingly well educated, loved study, and was mistress of the French, Latin, and English languages; she also cultivated music and painting with great success. She was very fair, and possessed a dignified deportment; but, although very amiable to those with whom she was intimate, her manners were formal and cold in society.

In 1807 she lost her mother, and, her father having contracted a third marriage, Marie Louise would have led a solitary and weary existence at the court of Vienna, if her taste for the arts, and her industry in cultivating them, had not enabled her to make rich acquisitions, and provided her with an inexhaustible fund of amusement.

When Napoleon conducted his great and victorious army into the heart of Germany in the year 1809,

Francis II. quitted Vienna, leaving his capital and his daughter, the archduchess Marie Louise, who was confined to her bed by indisposition, in the power of the French monarch, upon which occasion he paid great attention to her, and bestowed on her much kindness. Mary Louise frankly expressed her gratitude to the magnanimous conqueror, and the emperor, who had determined on his divorce, destined the young archduchess to provide France with direct heirs to the throne.

He accordingly signed a treaty of peace with Austria, the condition of which was, the hand of Marie Louise. On his return to Paris the dissolution of his marriage was pronounced, and France was made acquainted with the projected alliance with Austria,—an alliance to which the nation had always a repugnance, which it formerly manifested on the occasion of the marriage of Louis XVI. with Marie Antoinette.

In 1810, Alexander Berthier, prince of Neufchâtel and Wagram, was sent to Vienna to conduct the princess to France, and received her hand in the name of Napoleon, in a magnificent tent which was erected for the purpose at Braunau, where her father gave her five hundred thousand francs in gold before her departure. The archduchess found all the ladies that were to compose her court assembled at that place; they were chosen from among the most illustrious and ancient of the no-

bility, and at their head was the queen of Naples and the duchess of Montebello. All the Austrian ladies attached to her service were admitted to kiss her hand and then take leave of her; her head governess, Madame Lazanzky, alone being permitted to remain with her for a short space of time.

Each evening during her journey to France, instead of taking repose, Marie Louise found a magnificent fête prepared for her entertainment, and a page awaiting her arrival with a letter and a present from the emperor. At Soissons a camp was erected for her reception, at which Napoleon waited to receive her; and as soon as he was informed of her approach, instead of conforming to the ceremonials which he had himself regulated, he sprang into the carriage of his betrothed, and conducted her directly to the château of Compiègne, where she was obliged from political motives to part with Madame Lazanzky, to whom she was tenderly attached.

Magnificent fêtes were prepared in Paris for the reception of the young empress, who, brilliant with youth and happiness, entered the capital in the triumphant car of her illustrious consort, accompanied by a superb retinue, in the midst of unanimous acclamations. The civil form of marriage took place at the château of Saint Cloud, and the religious ceremony was performed by

Cardinal Fesch in the great gallery of the Louvre at Paris.

In the midst of all the pomps and rejoicings on the occasion, an unfortunate catastrophe occurred, which recalled to the recollection of the public the disasters that happened at the marriage of Louis XVI. A fire broke out at the residence of Prince Schwartzburg, the Austrian ambassador, when numerous victims were consumed,—amongst others, the Princess Schwartzburg; and the empress and several other ladies were indebted for their lives to the courage and coolness of Napoleon.

Marie Louise accompanied the emperor in several journeys through France, and was universally welcomed as the wife of Napoleon, though unanimous regrets were bestowed on the excellent woman whose place she occupied. They hoped to find in the empress, as in her predecessor, that unalterable benignity, that gracious compassion for misfortune, that protection for the arts, and that inexhaustible benevolence which solaced so many evils; instead of which, she was dignified and unbending, perfect in court etiquette, and mild, but heartless. The courtiers truly had an empress, but the people of France had no longer a mother. By degrees the enthusiasm which was displayed on her arrival abated, and many who had left Josephine were eager to return to her,

knowing that her heart was too generous to refuse pardon, even for neglect.

The splendours of the throne did not dazzle Marie Louise, who was an enemy to state affairs. Destitute of ambition, she refused to listen to the counsel of her mother-in-law, who advised her to take advantage of the emperor's affection for her by initiating herself in the affairs of state; advice which she afterwards repented having refused to heed, when her husband left her the regency at that critical period when serious circumstances required talent and energy proportionate to the perils which menaced the state.

In 1811 the wishes of Napoleon and his vast empire were accomplished by the birth of the hereditary prince and king of Rome. Marie Louise was in imminent danger, and endured cruel sufferings on the occasion; and the emperor, having been informed by the celebrated physician, Dubois, that he feared it would be necessary to sacrifice either the mother or the child, exclaimed, "*Sauvez ma femme ! peu m'importe le reste.*"

In the year 1812 Napoleon resolved to make war with Russia, and assembled all his allies at Dresden, to which place Marie Louise accompanied him, and met her father, who was at that time an ally of France. The éclat and splendour of the entertainments and ceremonies which took place on the occasion surpassed anything of the

sort that had ever before occurred ; and Marie Louise, whose court was composed of kings and queens, appeared attired in dresses which were literally covered with diamonds.

But this grandeur was soon dissipated by the misfortunes which the rigorous climate of Russia caused the great army, the disasters of which shook the throne of the conqueror. He, however, re-organized new forces, and in 1813 hastened to defend the frontiers of France. On leaving Paris Napoleon confided the regency to Marie Louise, whose name was from that time inscribed upon all the acts of government.

Though amiable among her friends and within the confines of her court, the empress was far from affable in public, and disliked participating in political affairs, which the imperious nature of events necessarily imposed on her, and which, as a wife and mother, she should have made it a duty to accomplish with the energy which the importance of circumstances required. In that position she should have endeavoured to rouse the enthusiasm of the citizens, to have sustained her dynasty by rendering herself popular, and prevented the defection of the dignitaries of the empire by affability. All this Marie Louise neglected to do ; nevertheless, the French valiantly defended every foot of their territory, which was deluged with their blood. In vain Napoleon

exhausted all the resources of his talent and genius; abandoned and betrayed, his army, which had hitherto been victorious, was weakened by superior numbers.

The emperor hastened towards Paris, but in the mean time a council was held at the Tuileries, and, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of M. de Talleyrand, Marie Louise, who had nothing personally to fear from the approaching enemy, yielded to timidity, and precipitately abandoned the capital, which she had defended with her brother-in-law, Joseph Bonaparte, with whom she retired to Blois; upon which the town capitulated, and the allied sovereigns of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, entered with their troops. Napoleon retired to Fontainebleau, where he was forced to sign his abdication of the imperial power; and on the 20th of April, 1814, took leave of his kingdom and his soldiers on his departure for the island of Elba.

At Blois the empress vainly endeavoured to continue the acts of the regency; she issued a brilliant proclamation which was impressed with a military and national spirit, but without success. General Sacken, one of the Russian emperor's aid-de-camps, conveyed her from Blois to Orleans, where he confided her to the care of prince Esterhazy, who was charged to present her to her father at the château of Rambouillet. After having received her father's embrace, Marie Louise placed her young son,

the king of Rome, in his arms, but Francis II. was little affected by her misfortunes or the claims of his offspring, having silenced the voice of nature to lend a willing ear to the insinuations of a dark policy, which had induced him to assist in overturning the throne of his daughter and grandson. This circumstance rendered his presence in Paris so revolting, that he was coldly received on all sides. If it was indispensable for him to visit that town which his daughter had so ungenerously abandoned, he might at least have arrived *incognito*, and not at mid-day, surrounded by a brilliant staff. On his entrance not one cry of welcome was uttered, not a hat was raised; the people seemed to have forgotten that he was a monarch, and looked upon him only as a bad father profiting by the misfortune of his child.

Francis II. sent Marie Louise to Austria, and assigned her the magnificent and picturesque château of Schoenbrunn for her residence. The treaty of Fontainebleau, which maternal feelings ought to have urged her to reject with indignation, secured to her the duchy of Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla, upon condition that she would formally renounce all right to the crown of France for herself and her son for ever.

In 1815, when Napoleon escaped from Elba and with unprecedented success accomplished the audacious enterprise of re-entering France at the head of three hundred

men, Marie Louise attempted to quit Schoenbrunn with her son : but her measures were badly taken ; the police-officers stopped her carriage, and the Emperor Francis a second time opposed the prosperity of his daughter.

From that time she was separated from her son, the duke of Reichstadt, who was retained at the palace of Vienna, where he languished in delicate health until the year 1832, when he died in the arms of his mother, who repaired to that court for the purpose of seeing him once again.

In 1816 Marie Louise took possession of her estates of Parma, which the queen of Etruria having laid claim to, the Holy Alliance only permitted her the temporary enjoyment of ; perhaps it was also to punish her for her attempted escape. In those territories the archduchess has cultivated her talent for the arts and literature, protected the learned, and executed some works of public utility. After Napoleon's death, being deprived of any habitual communication with her family, she formed a private marriage with her prime minister, the count de Niepperg, by whom she had two children.

This nobleman was the issue of an ancient family of Wirtemberg, a skilful general, and an experienced diplomatist ; he was possessed of an agreeable person and polished manners, but had lost an eye in one of the wars which Austria was obliged to sustain against Napoleon.

He was forty years of age when Prince Metternich placed the administration of the government of Marie Louise in his hands with unlimited power. Complaisant, talented, and protected and patronized in all his actions by the Austrian cabinet, he succeeded in pleasing the archduchess, and made such rapid progress in obtaining the confidence of a young woman who was separated from her adopted country and the few French who followed her after the allied powers of Europe had deprived her of her exalted fortune, that she at length gave him her hand.

The count of Niepperg governed the duchy of Parma with talent and judgment for fourteen years, and died in 1828. His marriage with the archduchess not having been declared, that princess still retains the title of the widow of Napoleon the Great.

Marie Louise is condemned for two great faults, by one of which—the having yielded Paris to the foreign army—the ruin of the imperial dynasty was much accelerated. Had she followed the example of her grandmother Marie Thérèse, by gaining the hearts of her people and reviving their energy, they would have rallied round her, and, like the Hungarians, have sworn to perish for their queen. Certainly the daughter of one of the chiefs of the coalition could not have had the dread of being outraged, or having her palace plun-

dered by the enemy, as an excuse for abandoning her post; and if, by the courage and perseverance of his mother, the young Napoleon had succeeded to the vacant throne of France, the foreign powers would not, in all probability, have restored the Bourbons to the government of an empire that had been so gloriously obtained and so skilfully occupied.

The second fault for which Marie Louise has been blamed is one which few women under any circumstances would have committed,—the having declined to share her husband's exile: by joining him she might have softened the rigours of his captivity, and soothed his days by the employment of her talents and accomplishments. Perhaps the consolation of having a beloved companion to assist in bearing the burden of his sorrows might have lengthened the term of his existence, and the arid rocks of Saint Helena might never have echoed the last sigh of Napoleon Bonaparte.

It would be superfluous to devote separate chapters to the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X., who, when Counts of Provence and Artois, were married, more than thirty years before their accession to the throne, the former to Marie Josephine Louise, and the latter to Marie Thérèse, both princesses of Savoy, and sisters, who lived and died in obscurity and exile.

QUEEN MARIE AMELIE.

MARIE AMELIE DE BOURBON, daughter of Ferdinand I., king of the Two Sicilies, and of Marie Caroline of Austria, was born at Caserta in Naples, on the 26th of April, 1782. Her education was confided to Madame d'Ambrosio, a lady whose great merits are little known, but through whose judicious instructions her royal highness acquired the love of those noble and simple virtues by which mankind both contribute to the happiness of all around them, and insure to themselves a pure and quiet conscience.

The Princess Amelia had hardly attained her tenth year, when the course of her education and the happy calm of her youthful days were disturbed by political storms; and, in 1792, a French fleet appeared in the Bay of Naples, under the command of Admiral La Touche Treville, and spread terror throughout her father's court. Her existence was one of continual alarm from that period until the year 1798, when the French army invaded Naples, under the command of General Championnet, and she was obliged to escape with her august parents to Palermo, where she remained with her mother Queen Caroline during the Neapolitan revolution.

In June, 1800, her royal highness accompanied the

queen to Leghorn, and from thence to Vienna, and continued in that city until 1802, by which period the victories of Suwarrow in Northern Italy had compelled the French troops to evacuate Naples, and the queen and Princess Amelie returned to that kingdom. Shortly after her arrival, she witnessed the marriage of her eldest brother, Prince Francis of Calabria, with Maria Isabella, infanta of Spain, and of her sister, Marie Antoinette, with the prince of Asturias, afterwards Ferdinand VII. The latter union, which robbed her of the society of a beloved sister, caused Marie Amelie the most profound regret, and her sorrows were increased by a recurrence of political misfortunes, when Napoleon again invested Naples with a French army, and placed his brother Joseph on the throne, which compelled her father to quit the kingdom, and once more retire with his family to Sicily.

In 1806 the Princess Amelie had to deplore not only the death of the cherished sister, Marie Antoinette, whose loss had cost her so much sorrow on her marriage, but that of her two eldest sisters, Marie Theresa, empress of Austria, and Marie Louisa, Grand Duchess of Tuscany. At this period political events had caused Louis Philippe, duke of Orleans, to sojourn in England, and he established himself with his two brothers, the duke de Montpensier, and the count de Beaujolais, in a

quiet retreat at Twickenham. There, his name, his virtues, and the charm attached to his adventurous travels, rendered him an object of equal admiration and respect to the English people, and of esteem and distinction to the English government. The tranquillity of his existence was however disturbed by the death of his brother the duke de Montpensier, who fell a victim to consumption in 1807; and his brother, the count de Beaujolais, having been attacked with the same malady, the duke of Orleans determined to remove him to a milder climate. Circumstances left him no choice but that of Malta or Madeira, and the two brothers arrived at Malta in the month of May, 1808. A short residence there having served to increase the languor of the suffering prince, and the physicians having declared that the air of Malta was pernicious to his brother, the duke of Orleans addressed a letter to Ferdinand I., informing him of his situation, and asking permission to transport his brother to Mount Etna; but almost before the king's reply could leave Palermo, the prince had ceased to exist.

After paying the last sad duties to the count de Beaujolais, the duke of Orleans embarked for Messina, where he received the reply of Ferdinand I., which was expressed in most flattering terms, and contained an invitation to Palermo. There, in 1808, he first beheld

the Princess Amelie, who in her retirement cultivated those precious qualities which can alone fortify the soul in misfortune. The duke of Orleans was not long at the court of Ferdinand before he remarked, and fully appreciated, her eminent qualities; but at that period the king, her father, was interested in sustaining the cause of his son-in-law, Ferdinand VII. of Spain, for which purpose he sent his second son, the Prince Leopold, to that kingdom; and the duke of Orleans, who was desirous of seeing his mother, and of proving his regard for the king, took leave of the princess he so much esteemed, and accompanied her brother upon this expedition. The princes were received at Gibraltar, but the English opposed their entering Spain, and while Leopold was retained in Gibraltar, Louis Philippe was conducted to England.

In June, 1808, the house of his mother, the duchess of Orleans, who resided at Figueras, was besieged by the French, and destroyed by the bombs; upon which occasion that princess and her daughter, Madame Adelaide, were obliged to escape in the night, and take refuge amongst the insurgent Spaniards. Under these circumstances the duchess was desirous of placing the Princess Adelaide under the guardianship of her son, Louis Philippe, and therefore sent her to Malta, but on arriving there, she was informed of her brother's depar-

ture for Palermo, and thence for Gibraltar. The princess repaired to Gibraltar, but was again disappointed in meeting the object of her search and her affection ; the duke had departed for England ; thither she went, and happily met him at Portsmouth, at the moment he was about to embark for Palermo, where the princess who had won his affections still remained with her family, Napoleon having placed Joachim Murat upon the throne of Naples.

On learning the cruel position of his mother, the duke of Orleans proposed to his sister to hasten to relieve her from it ; but the commander of the frigate had received express orders not to suffer the duke of Orleans to approach Spain, and a hazardous event enabled the brother and sister to achieve their filial wish, at least to a certain extent. They espied a little vessel near the coast of Spain, and the Chevalier de Broval, who had been attached to the family from their childhood, offered to leave the frigate which conveyed the prince and princess, and board the little coasting vessel. The proposition was accepted, signals were exchanged, the Chevalier de Broval reached the Peninsula, and repaired to the duchess of Orleans, whom he conducted in safety to Port Mahon, while the duke of Orleans and Madame Adelaide continued their voyage to Sicily, where they received a cor-

dial welcome from the king and queen, and the Princess Amelie.

A warm friendship was established between Marie Amelie and the Princess Adelaide, cemented perhaps by mutual sympathy for the misfortunes that had pursued them since their earliest years, and increased by the affectionate attachment of the duke for both. The Princess Amelie was not insensible to the excellent qualities of her admirer, and her mother, Queen Marie Caroline, seeing that their hearts and characters assimilated, and that her daughter's sentiments were in conformity with those which she had inspired, united with the king in expressing her approval of the union. The duke of Orleans desired but one thing more to complete his happiness; it was the presence of his only absent relative, his revered mother. He therefore again set out with the Princess Adelaide, and after a speedy voyage arrived at Port Mahon, where he once more had the joy of embracing the beloved parent whom he had not seen for the space of sixteen years. The little family immediately returned to Palermo, where they were anxiously expected; and once more united to all that was dear to him, Louis Philippe received, with the hand of Marie Amelie, a reward for his virtues, and a solace for his past troubles. The marriage was celebrated on the 29th of November, 1809.

The newly-married pair for the first time enjoyed the charms of a peaceful existence, which lasted until the month of May in the following year, when the Spaniards, a prey to the horrors of war, entreated the duke of Orleans to assist them with his counsel and military skill ; he therefore repaired to Cadiz, where he remained until September, 1810, and returned to Palermo a few days after the duchess of Orleans had given birth to her son Ferdinand Louis Philippe, duke of Chartres (the late lamented duke of Orleans).

In the bosom of her affectionate family, the happy wife and mother, untroubled by the political movements that were agitating Europe, enjoyed all the felicity that springs from a fond and well-assorted union, until 1811, when disturbances manifested themselves in Sicily, in consequence of differences which arose between the Queen Marie Caroline, and her allies, the English, who desired to have the entire government of the island. Two parties were formed, one for England and another for the queen ; and notwithstanding the efforts of the Neapolitan troops, who supported her cause, the English obliged her to quit Sicily ; and the good King Ferdinand and his amiable daughter were compelled to submit to the cruel separation.

Three years had expired, during which the duchess of Orleans gave birth to two princesses, Louise Marie,

now queen of the Belgians, and Marie Christine, afterwards duchess of Wurtembourg, when the news of the re-establishment of the Bourbons on the throne of France reached the court of Palermo, upon which the prince, who was desirous to revisit his native land, hastened to Paris, and was affectionately welcomed by the royal family. He immediately after returned to Sicily to conduct the duchess and his children to France, and installed them in the palace of his fathers, the *Palais Royal*. The closest union existed between the princes of the royal family; and Louis Philippe, who was appointed colonel-general of the Hussars, rejoiced over the birth of a fourth child, Louis Charles Philippe, duke of Nemours, born in October, 1814. The return of Napoleon from the island of Elba was a new cause of anxiety to him and the duchess; and the rapid progress of that terrible convulsion induced the duke to require his illustrious wife to leave Paris, and undergo a temporary separation from him, in order to secure his children from the dangers that menaced all the members of the royal family. Marie Amelie therefore quitted Paris with her children on the night of the 12th March, 1815, and repaired to the duke's former retreat at Twickenham, where she was shortly joined by her royal husband.

On the 8th of March, 1816, the duchess of Orleans gave birth to a princess (who died two years after at

Neuilly), and after the re-establishment of her health, returned, with her family, to France, and once more inhabited the royal residence of the branch of Orleans. But the favourite abode of the illustrious pair was the château of Neuilly, situated at some distance from Paris, beyond the superb arch and magnificent avenue which form the eastern entrance to the capital.

This charming spot will need nothing more to render it interesting in history than the circumstance of its having been the one hallowed by the return of the exiles, and the favourite dwelling of the most happy and illustrious of families. It was the constant object of care and embellishment; and, though by the quiet style of its architecture it appears to shun the pomp of a royal residence, is arranged with the most perfect taste, and is both a classical and a sylvan retreat. There all appears disposed for tranquillity and study; for the peaceful enjoyments of life and the games of childhood; the dwelling of princes and princesses; and at the same time, the abode of simplicity and Christianity.

Around the château of Neuilly extend vast gardens, thick shrubberies, verdant lawns, shady paths, and gay pastures. In this agreeable dwelling the princess Amelie reared her young family; there the young princes gayly spent their vacations; and there, beneath the eyes of a

fond mother, the princesses acquired the virtues for which they are distinguished.

The duchess of Orleans gave birth to her royal highness princess Clementine at Neuilly, the year after her return to France ; and during the five succeeding years, four sons, the dukes of Joinville, Penthièvre, Aumale, and Montpensier, increased the happy circle.

She partook of the sentiments of the duke, her husband, in considering a public education most advantageous for her sons, and seconded his determination of placing them at the college of Henry IV. Her eldest son, then duke of Chartres, was a most distinguished scholar ; his studies were extensive, his acquirements many, and, upon the distribution of the prizes, none could count more rewards or marks of approbation for his juvenile successes. Alas ! those loved trophies of infancy, the garlands so dear to former remembrances, are all piously preserved by the affectionate mother, whose joy and pride consisted in the happiness of her children.

Near to the cabinet of the duke of Orleans at Neuilly were the parlours of the duchess and Madame Adelaide, the cherished sister of Louis Philippe, who shared alike his misfortunes and his prosperity, and who, in her attachment to him, has adopted all his family, in the bosom of which passes her days, and in this happy union devotes herself to the daily performance of good acts. At

the château of Neuilly also are to be seen the music, drawing, and school-rooms of the princesses ; the studio of the princess Marie, the little apartment of each beloved child, and the play-room, which often resounded with merry peals of laughter.

In 1830 the duke of Orleans was proclaimed lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and the revolution still further progressing, Charles X. abdicated the throne ; soon after which the firing of a royal salute announced to the inmates of Neuilly that their delicious retreat was numbered among the royal residences. The duchess of Orleans was, no doubt, gratified by the establishment of her dynasty upon the throne, and also convinced that there was not one of the royal princes so capable of wielding the sceptre of France as her illustrious husband ; but on her own account, perhaps, there were some tears shed in secret ; for it is easy to imagine that the cares of royalty, and the anxieties attached to the crown, must have cost something to happiness. But neither the visits, the royal receptions, nor the military guard, have altered the primitive simplicity of Neuilly. It is the spot of reunion for the scattered family, and the Eden of repose when the noise of the court is hushed.

In 1836 the duke of Orleans took a voyage on the Mediterranean ; and before his return to France, visited Germany, where, at the court of Berlin, he beheld the

young duchess Helena of Mecklenbourg, sister to the reigning duchess : an attachment sprung up between the youthful pair, and the prince, having obtained their majesties' sanction, made her an offer of his hand. The marriage ceremony was fixed for the ensuing year ; and the king, who determined upon celebrating it in the palace of Fontainebleau, issued orders for restoring a portion of its ancient splendour to that magnificent residence. The rich paintings in the gallery of Henry II. recovered the brilliant tints that had been concealed beneath the dust of ages ; the gilded door was once more radiant ; the histories of Alexander the Great's exploits and weaknesses were again to be seen delineated on the *Escalier du Roi* ; the *Salle des Gardes*, near the old *Pavillon de Saint Louis*, displayed its heraldic frescos ; Henry IV.'s superb chimney was repaired, and many sumptuous and tasteful works augmented its magnificence.

Their majesties, accompanied by all the court and an immense concourse of people, joyfully repaired to Fontainebleau to witness the marriage of the illustrious pair, whose destinies were so intimately connected with their own ; and on the 29th of May, 1837, as the sun's last rays fell upon the royal group and noble assemblage who occupied the terrace, and upon the regiments ranged in the court of the *Cheval Blanc*, a distant signal announced the approach of the prince royal's bride ; shortly

after she alighted at the foot of the great staircase which conducted to the terrace, and was led by the duke de Nemours to the king, who, on bestowing his parental benediction, affectionately embraced his newly-adopted child. The queen received the Princess Helena in her arms, and a rapid interchange of welcomes and smiles reassured the timid bride, and naturalized her in the royal family. The marriage was solemnized the day following, and the fêtes were magnificent; but an untoward accident, which occurred at the Champ de Mars in consequence of the immense crowd that had assembled, when several persons were killed, saddened the gayety which had everywhere abounded. A grand ball that was to have taken place at the Hôtel de Ville, was adjourned, and their majesties and the prince and princess royal bestowed abundant aid upon the sufferers and their families, for whom they expressed the deepest commiseration, gave pensions to many, and distributed immense sums among the poor.

The happiness that the queen enjoyed in the daily conviction of the regard and admiration her son and his amiable duchess inspired was not, however, unsullied, for there is no permanent joy on earth. Happy are they whose paradise is within their own breasts! Had not the exemplary queen of the French possessed the peace which a reliance on that Being in whose hand are our destinies,

and the assurance that the most beloved are the most tried, she must have sunk under the anxieties and alarms which the atrocious attempts against the lives of her husband and sons have at different times caused her. But other trials were also reserved for Queen Amelie. She was called to resign her most cherished daughter, the amiable and talented Princess Marie, duchess of Wurtemberg, whose rare qualities were the charm and admiration of all around her, and who was taken by death from her fond relatives in 1838.

On the 24th of August, in the same year, the young duchess of Orleans gave birth to Louis Philippe, Comte de Paris; and on the 9th of November, 1840, to her second son, Robert Philippe duke de Chartres.

On the 13th of July, 1842, a fatal accident spread mourning over the royal family, who were summoned to witness the last agonies of the heir to the throne of France, upon whom the eyes of the whole nation, civil and military, were turned with love and admiration.

The despair and desolation of the queen upon that melancholy occurrence are beyond description; it was a mixture of firmness and weakness, reason and delirium. It would be difficult to say whose sufferings were most poignant, those of the distracted and weeping mother, or of the august father, who opposed a dignified resignation to the most profound affliction. “O! if it were but

me !” he exclaimed with emotion, as he pressed his dying son to his bosom. When the prince royal had breathed his last, the king generously stifled his own sorrow to alleviate that of the unhappy queen ; he drew her away from the chamber of death, and conducted her into a contiguous apartment, where the ministers and marshals were assembled, and who, in the excess of their commiseration, knelt around her and endeavoured to console her, when, with true patriotic feeling, which even her agonizing grief had not suppressed, she exclaimed, “ What a misfortune for our family ! and also, what a terrible misfortune for France !”

After this fatal catastrophe her majesty gave directions that the articles that composed the furniture of the humble chamber in which the duke of Orleans expired, should be conveyed to the château of Neuilly, and deposited there with other precious vestiges, as a sad but pious *souvenir*. She also desired that a chapel should be erected on the spot where the house stood, and the building is now in progress.

The prince was buried at Dreux, by the side of his sister, the princess Marie.*

* The burial-place of the house of Orleans is celebrated in history, having several times been an object of dispute to valiant and ferocious chiefs. Beneath its walls the counts of Normandy and Chartres fought desperate battles, and the Counts d’Albret and Nevers met in deadly combat. It was for a long time in the hands of the

The good Queen Amelie, strengthened by the consolations which religion afforded her, was not only resigned to her misfortune, but also contributed to the consolation of the widowed Duchess of Orleans, to whom she is fondly attached. That highly intellectual princess has been, from her childhood, accustomed to deep reflection and the study of serious authors. Her retired habits have, in a great measure, rendered the superior qualities for which she is distinguished, little known ; but the high esteem and affection with which she has inspired her august parents and all the royal family, and the attachment unceasingly manifested for her by the prince royal, are convincing proofs of her great merits. The solidity of her judgment, her superior mind, her good sense, and her inexhaustible charity, afford the best assurances of the excellent education she is capable of bestowing on the future king of the French.

English, from whom Charles V. eventually purchased it. Dreux was a portion of the dower appropriated to Catherine de Medicis, from whom it descended to her youngest son, the duke of Alençon, afterwards Henry III. It is celebrated as the spot in which the two great captains Condé and Montmorency fought in the cause of religion, and was besieged and taken by Henry IV. of France. The chapel that contains the remains of the family of Orleans was erected on the site of the collegiate church by the late dowager duchess of Orleans, mother to his majesty Louis Philippe, three of whose children repose here.

In conferring the most legitimate eulogy on crowned heads there is a certain feeling of embarrassment; but it should not be a motive for withholding that which serves both for precept and example.

Throughout the course of Queen Amelie's life, during the epochs that were remarkable for great political storms and the disasters that overwhelmed her family, in her alarms for the safety of her husband and sons, her desolation for the loss of her children, and all the vicissitudes and troubles, public and domestic, with which her life has been agitated, she has proved herself a true Christian. With her benevolence is an innate virtue; she has always practised it; as wife and mother, she is an example of tenderness and devotion. Simplicity is a peculiar trait in her character, and the grandeurs of royalty have no charms for her but those which enable her to do good; yet she never declines the responsibility attached to the throne upon which Providence has placed her; and although she would be happy in the enjoyment of private life, she refuses the performance of nothing which her elevated position requires of her. Noble without pride, charitable without ostentation, resigned but not weak, affable in manners and conversation, but dignified in deportment and devout in the performance of her religious duties, the queen of the French and her exemplary court are the pride of all France, which con-

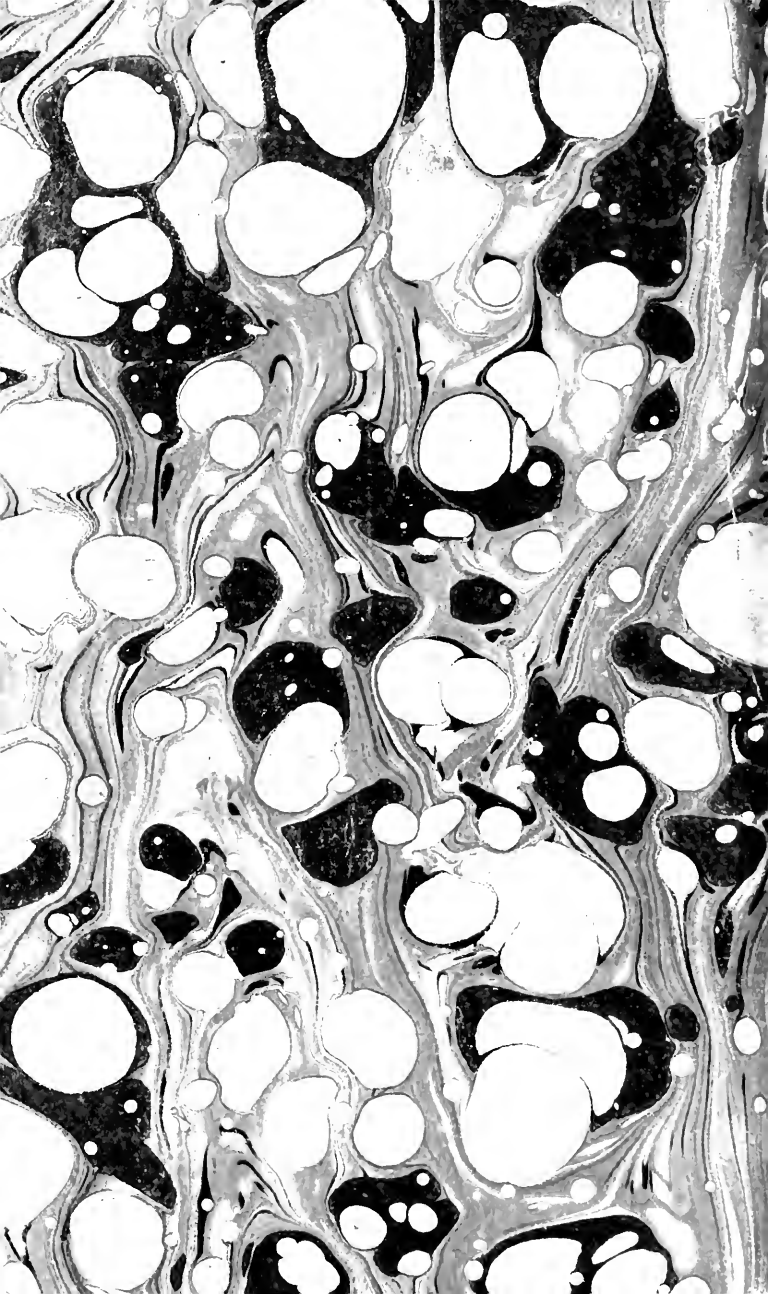
templates with admiration the pure brilliancy of the throne wherein the most perfect conjugal and national virtues are united—an example by which the royal pair have acquired a celebrity that time can never rob them of; proving that *good* sovereigns are even more immortalized than *great* ones.*

* It will scarcely be necessary to remind our readers, that the important events of the Revolution of 1848, have occurred since the publication of the London edition of this work. Events which have entirely changed the position and fortunes of the last Queen of France.—[AM. PUB.]

THE END.







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